

GREEK – RUSSIAN RELATIONS 1990 – 2008 – A Neoclassical Realist Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to analyze the bilateral relations between Greece and Russia during the period 1990 – 2008 from the perspective of Neoclassical Realism. To better contextualize this relationship, the article briefly reviews existing studies on the nature of Greek – Russian interactions. Most analysts, regarding the period 2000 – 2008 period, have employed Structural Realism to provide a deeper interpretation of the relationship. However, the aim of this article is to highlight a range of factors influencing interstate relations drawing on the principles of Neoclassical Realist theory.

INTRODUCTION

More specifically, between 1990 and 2008 especially from 2000 onwards, the existing literature provides further analysis and interpretation of the relations between the two states through the lens of Structural Realism. Most researchers focused on Greece's pursuit of its national interests amid an unstable international environment, marked by security challenges arising from the Balkan crisis and Turkey's revisionism.

Specifically, Tziampiris invokes the principles of the Structural Realist approach in order to explain the bilateral relations between Athens and Moscow, noting that following the upward trajectory of the Russian economy began to record, Putin elevated energy policy to a central pillar of international diplomacy. Thirteen years after the initial proposal for the construction of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline, the project returned to the forefront and an agreement was signed between Greece, Russia, and Bulgaria for its construction. Subsequent meetings between the Former

Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis and President Putin, emphasized both the importance of completing the project and the pursuit of further economic cooperation¹.

Similar observations to those made by Tziambiris can also be found in the work of Michalis L. Myrianthis and Th. Tsakiris, who argue that the energy diplomacy pursued from 2004 onwards signified a "return" of Greek foreign policy to Realism². Myrianthis, Tziambiris and Tsakiris all note that Greece aimed to position itself as a hydrocarbon transit hub, a move expected to generate benefits of national, political and economic levels³. According to Triantafyllou, Grigoriadis and Iordanidis, the intensification of energy cooperation discussions between the two states served as a counterbalance to parallel negotiations between Moscow and Ankara⁴. Turkey's redefinition as a regional power and its strategic emergence as an energy hub due to its geographical location prompted Greece to deepen its engagement with Russia⁵. According to Tziambiris, Greece sought to pursue its national and geopolitical interests with "power terms" as he characteristically notes, thus its foreign policy can only be understood through the lens of Structural Realist Theory⁶.

The basic principles of Neoclassical Realism are briefly presented below, followed by an application of this specific theory for the analysis of Greek foreign policy during the decade 1990 - 2008 is sought, with the aim of identifying the factors that intensified a diplomatic engagement with Russia.

¹A. Tziambiris, 'I Nea Ellhnorosiki Prosengisi: Realismos i «Sugkrousi Politismon»', *Geostratigiki*, p. 85

²M. L., Myrianthis, 'Energeiakes diasynthesis kai diplomatia (2004 – 2014) Epistrofi sto Realismo' in P. I. Tsakwnas and Th. P. Dokos (ed.), *SYNCHRONI ELLINIKI EXOTERIKI POLITIKI. Paragontes Diamorphosis kai Mesa Askisis*, Publications: I. SIDERIS, 2019, p. 343, Th., Tsakiris, 'I Elliniki Energeiaki Politiki apo ti Valkaniki eos ti Notioanatoliki Mesogeio', *ELIAMEP*, no. 96, 2018, p.

³A., Tziampiris, p.92, M., L., Myrianthis, 2019, p. 349, Th., Tsakiris, 2018, p.

⁴D. Triantaphyllou, 'Greek Foreign Policy in Defense of the National Interest: Teetering between Exceptionalism and Integration', *International Relationships*, vol. 15, no. 58, 2018, p.115, Th. Grigoriadis, V. Iordanidis, 'Greek – Russian relations I: Foreign policy and diplomacy', *ELIAMEP*, no. 54, 2014, p. 11

⁵D. Triantaphyllou, 2018, 114, M., L., Myrianthis, 2019, p. 344

⁶A., Tziampiris, p. 94

NEOCLASSICAL REALISM

Neoclassical Realism is a modern theoretical approach that combines the scientific methodology and causal analysis of the international system by Neorealists with the examination of internal factors - such as leadership perceptions and state behavior – rooted in Classical Realism⁷. It bridges the divide between domestic and systemic influences on foreign policy by introducing into the analysis of international relations the intervening variables that link the structure of the international system with the state behavior⁸.

Neoclassical Realists, in examining the variables that determine the state's international policy, claimed that state's choices are primarily determined by its position in the international system and more specifically by its material power. As such, "material power" constitutes the foundation upon which foreign policy is based. However, the political decisions are made by central leadership and governing elites, meaning that a state's assessment of both its own power and that of others is often shaped by perception rather than of an objective assessment of its natural resources and capabilities⁹. Consequently, the perceptions and actions of the political leaders may be shaped by internal dynamics that influence how they respond to external pressures. Such dynamics are likely to develop from public opinion, ideological convictions, traditional elites, the military, domestic coalitions propaganda and internal bureaucratic rivalries. Factors that determine how foreign policy is shaped and implemented¹⁰.

Following this, Neoclassical Realists argued that international relations are shaped by a set of variables, which they categorized as independent, dependent and intervening. Independent variables refer to the external pressures stemming from the anarchic structure of the international system, while dependent variables include the strategies and policies adopted by states in "response" to these pressures. The intervening variable is state power as filtered through both institutional and extra -

⁷NM Ripsman , 'Neoclassical Realism', *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies* , 2023, p . 1

⁸M. Foulon , 'Neoclassical Realism: Challengers and Bridging Identities', *International Studies Review* , vol. 17, no. 4, 2015, p . 635 - 636

⁹G. Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', *World Politics* , vol. 51, no. 1, 1998, p . 148

¹⁰MK Karkut , 'Neoclassical Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis – A Possible Way of Integration ? ', *Theory Polityki* , 2019, p . 209

institutional actors¹¹. This means that, while Neoclassical realists accept the Neorealist premise regarding the absence of a global authority and resulting anarchy, they also emphasize the role of domestic actors and the way in which they interpret the relative distribution of power and shaping foreign policy accordingly¹².

In more detail, building on the core principles of Realist Theory, Neoclassical Realists argue that the material power plays a key role in defining national interests¹³. However, since material power is inherently relative, a state's actions in pursuit of its national interests may not always reflect the actual conditions prevailing in both the domestic and international environment¹⁴. According to some analysts, this discrepancy is often due to the influence of internal actors who may exert pressure to shape national security policy, in way that promote or protect their own interests¹⁵. Benjamin O. Fordham also points out that the emergence of the national interest is only possible when the interests of the majority of domestic actors align resulting in a shared understanding of what constitutes the national interest¹⁶.

However, this view was not universally accepted, as notable differences emerged among neoclassical realist theorists regarding the nature of independent and intermediate variables¹⁷. Some scholars focused on the influence of a state's material power on its foreign policy, while others focused more on shifts in the components of that power overtime¹⁸. A different school of thought highlighted how great powers respond to the decrease or increase in their internal resources, but also to the "imbalances" (*under - balancing*) in the international system ¹⁹. Still others examined the role of actor's ideas and beliefs as key intervening variables shaping a state's political decisions. Drawing on the principles of political psychology, these

¹¹JW Taliaferro , 'Neoclassical Realism and resource extraction: State building for future war' in St. Lobell , NM Ripsman , JW Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism the State, and Foreign Policy* , 2009, p . 213

¹²JD Firoozabadi , MZ Ashkezari , 'Neo-classical Realism in International Relations', *Asian Social Science* , vol. 12 , no . 6, 2016, p . 96

¹³N. Kitchen, 'Systemic pressures and domestic ideas: a neoclassical realist model of grand strategy formation', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 36, 2010, p . 134

¹⁴JW Taliaferro , 2009, pp . 224 - 225

¹⁵NM Ripsman , 'Neoclassical Realism and Domestic interest groups', in St. Lobell , NM Ripsman , JW Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism the State, and Foreign Policy* , 2009, 192 - 193

¹⁶BO Fordham, ' The limits of neoclassical realism: additive and interactive approaches to explaining foreign policy preferences', in St. Lobell , NM Ripsman , JW Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism the State, and Foreign Policy* , 2009, p . 257

¹⁷M. Beqa , 'Neoclassical Realism: Its Promises and Limits as a Theory of Foreign Policy', *EUROPEAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH* , vol. 5, is. 1, 2017, p . 326

¹⁸G. Rose, 1998, p . 155

¹⁹G. Rose, 1998, p . 155

scholars expanded on the Neorealists' assumption of rational state behavior, pointing out that the perception of external threats is formed through the cognitive processing of information by decision-makers²⁰.

Despite the fact that each analyst applied a different evaluate framework in presenting the intervening variables, they all emphasized the role of domestic actors in providing a more comprehensive interpretation of a state foreign policy. In fact, in an introductory overview of the core assumptions of Neoclassical Realism, Taliaferro, Lobell and Ripsman argue that Neoclassical Realism is the theory that seeks to explain the differences in a state's foreign policy over time or the contrasts between two or more states facing similar external threats²¹.

GREEK – RUSSIAN RELATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF NEOCLASSICAL REALISM

Government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis: 1990 – 1993

Independent Variables

In the early 1990s, following the collapse of Yugoslavia, the citizens of FYROM (now North Macedonia) overwhelmingly voted in favor of initiating the process of establishing an independent Macedonian state, through a referendum held on September 8, 1991²². Regarding the international community's response, both American and European diplomats supported the country's accession to the European Union, motivated by concerns over potential destabilization in the Western Balkans region²³.

²⁰G. Meibauer , 'Interest, ideas and the study of state behavior in neoclassical realism', *Review of International studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2020, p . 23

²¹JW Taliaferro, SE Lobell , NM Ripsman , 'Introduction: Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy', , in St. Lobell , NM Ripsman , JW Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism the State, and Foreign Policy* , 2009, p . 21

²²L.,M., Danforth, 'Claims to Macedonian Identity: The Macedonian Question and the Breakup of Yugoslavia', *Anthropology Today* , vol. 9, no. 4, 1993, p. 4

²³M., Nimetz , 'The Macedonian “Name” Dispute: The Macedonian Question—Resolved?', *Nationality Papers* , vol. 48, no. 2, 2020, p. 209

At the same time, in the early 1990s, Turkey emerged as a strong ally of the United States. Its participation in the Gulf War and the assistance it provided to the Americans significantly enhanced its geostrategic importance for the United States and NATO ²⁴. The cooperation between the two states had a direct impact on issues such as the Cyprus Issue, where Washington supported the compromise solution proposed by the UN for the establishment of a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation²⁵. This was a solution that, despite objections from both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides, was actively promoted by the UN and the United States, reflecting their intention to maintain a neutral stance regarding the resolution of the Cyprus Issue.

In addition, after the collapse of the USSR, significant migration flows were recorded both within and beyond the borders of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). These migration waves were driven by internal conflicts that erupted in the former Soviet Republics as well as the pursuit of better living conditions²⁶. Although a substantial number of migrants from the former communist states had already been recorded during the 1980s, the migration flows of the early 1990s were marked by particular complexity, prompting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and international humanitarian organizations to intervene in a region with which international institutions had previously had limited engagement²⁷. Greece served as a host country for many refugees and immigrants, including individuals from Greek minority communities within the CIS countries.

However, beyond the external dynamics that unfolded at national, political and cultural levels, economic transformation also played a crucial role. The globalized economy fostered an international "dialogue" in the fields of economics and energy. In particular, plans for the construction of hydrocarbon pipelines, the expansion of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) production, the rise of the BRICS and the emergence of other new economies, significantly contributed to the internationalization of economic

²⁴J., Zannoti , ' Turkey-US Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges', *Congressional Research Service: Informing the legislative debate since 1914* , 2011, p. 38

²⁵J., Brademas , SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, US FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ROLE OF CONGRESS, *Cyprus Review* , 1997, p. 125

²⁶V., Tishkov , Z., Zayinschovskaya , G., Vitkovskaya , 'Migration in the countries of the former Soviet Union: A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Program of the Global Commission on International Migration', *GLOBAL COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION* , 2001, p. 1

²⁷B., Nahalo , 'Complex refugee and displacement problems have emerged in the former Soviet Union as a result of numerous ethnic conflicts, causing increasing concern at UNHCR and among the international community', *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency* , is. 98, 1994,

activity²⁸. The economic reconstructing of the period strengthened the desire of European states to secure hydrocarbons and other raw materials primarily from Russia and the Middle East. Consequently, a form of energy diplomacy began to develop, culminating the formalization of such efforts with the signing of the Energy Charter in 1991²⁹. This agreement aimed to enhance energy security through the establishment of more open and competitive energy markets. Europe as a whole pursued an economic and energy dialogue with Russia, a process in which the states of Eastern and Southeastern Europe also actively participated.

Intervening Variables

During the settlement of the Macedonian Issue, the rupture between Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras led to a “division” within New Democracy party. Two distinct “camps” emerged from this confrontation: the Europeanists and the Nationalists³⁰. At the same time, the rhetoric of opposition parties also took on an anti-European orientation, while Mitsotakis lacked the necessary support alliances to effectively counter it³¹. Moreover, the reactions sparked by the handling of the Macedonian Issue within the Church combined with the intense mobilization of public opinion³² significantly eroded Mitsotaki’s political strength, leading to a broader trend toward the delegitimization of the government and in particular its political leadership.

At the same time, the arrival of many immigrants and refugees in Greece further reinforced this climate of anti-Europeanism sentiment, as attention increasingly turned toward the Former Soviet Union and its connection to the newly arrived population groups³³. In this context, the activities of identity-based pressure became particularly significant. As early as 1985, the International Pontic Congress was inaugurated,

²⁸I., Overland, 'Energy: The missing link in globalization', *Energy Research & Social Science* , vol. 14, p. 125

²⁹I. Mironova , 'Russia and the Energy Charter Treaty', *INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CHARTER* , 2014

³⁰D. Constatas , 'Greek Foreign Policy and the Community of International Relations Scholars', *Études helléniques / Hellenic Studies* , vol. 5, no. 2, p . 37

³¹A. Kalaitzidis , D. Felsen , 'Adding the domestic determinants to Greek foreign policy', *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* , vol. 35, no. 2, 2007, p . 223

³²DA Floudas , 'A NAME FOR A CONFLICT OR A CONFLICT FOR A NAME? AN ANALYSIS OF GREECE'S DISPUTE WITH FYROM', *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, vol. 24, no. 2, p . 297

³³P.,D., Karanou , 'Migration of Ethnic Greeks from the Former Soviet Union to Greece, 1990-2000: Policy Decisions and Implications', *Southeast European and Black Studies* , vol. 3, no.1, 2010, p.29

bringing together Pontic associations and organizations from around the world. The sphere of action of Pontic Greeks expanded to a global level, especially from the early 1990s onwards, developing connections and bonds of solidarity with the Greek diaspora of the former Soviet Republics. Through their mobilization, efforts they highlighted to the Greek state its “moral obligations” towards the Greeks from the former Soviet Union. Indeed, the Pontic Unions were recognized by government officials as being directly responsible for the repatriation of Greeks from the former Soviet states³⁴.

Finally, during this period, the stance of the political leadership on the international stage was significantly influenced by the actions of powerful businessmen. More specifically, private companies and entities were mobilized to promote the construction of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. Among them were RAO Gazprom, Prometheus Gas S. A., a joint venture consisting of the Russian company Vep Gazexport (holding 50%) and the Greek Copelouzos Group (holding the remaining 50%), as well as the Latsis Group³⁵. Dimitrios Copelouzos, a Greek businessman, had maintained close ties with Russian businessmen in the energy sector since 1980. Prometheus Gas was founded in 1991 and sourced raw materials from Russia, which it subsequently sold to Greece and other Balkan countries³⁶. That same year, Mitsotakis visited Moscow with the aim of establishing a cooperative channel with the Former President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, accompanied by a group of businessmen, hoping to strengthen Greek-Russian business relations through this visit³⁷.

Dependent Variables

The internal party turmoil caused by the Macedonian Issue and its escalation with the resignation of Antonis Samaras, as well as the fear of potential defections or independence moves by other New Democracy members aligned with the nationalist movement and opposed to a European-oriented policy, led Konstantinos Mitsotakis in

³⁴M. , Pratsinakis , 'Ethnic return migration, exclusion and the role of ethnic options: 'Soviet Greek' migrants in their ethnic homeland and the Pontic identity', *Nation and Nationalism* , vol. 27, 2021, p., 503

³⁵K., D. , Kentrotis , 'I Ellada and Tourkia ston kosmo ton energeiakon diktyon sta Valkania ', *Valkanika Symmeikta* , 1997, pp . 290 - 291

³⁶Dimitrios Copelouzos and the Copelouzos Group: Gazprom by any other nameq ?, WikiLeaks , 2007

³⁷S., Katsareli , 'Oi episkepseis ton Ellinon prothypourgon sti Moscha', *Faros tou Thermaikou* , 2015

1993 to pivot toward Russia. This shift was formalized with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on June 30 of that year³⁸. As emphasized in the Treaty, the contracting parties agreed to expand their relations at the political, cultural, economic and scientific levels³⁹.

In fact, following discussions with Greek businessmen regarding the constructions of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline, a round of negotiations with Russia was initiated for its implementation. Moreover, concerning the management of migration, Mitsotakis met with representatives of Greek communities from the former Soviet Union in order to emphasize the importance of strengthening ties between all Greeks both within Greek territory and across the former Soviet republics⁴⁰.

However, it is important to note that Konstantinos Mitsotakis did not significantly diverge from his ideological roots and beliefs, as Russia in the early 1990s - under Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev- reflected a liberal orientation and pursued a course toward "Euro-Atlantic integration"⁴¹.

Andreas Papandreou Government: 1994 - 1996

Independent Variables

Towards the end of Konstantinos Mitsotakis' government and shortly before Andreas Papandreou came to power, the United Nations Security Council recognized the accession of Macedonia to the UN⁴². Specifically, the United States officially recognized the state of Macedonia in 1994, leading to the expansion of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1995⁴³. It is notable that from 1994 onwards, Washington took active role in seeking a resolution to the Issue appointing special envoys to the region tasked with acting as mediators in the search for a solution⁴⁴.

³⁸ NOMOS 2250/1994 - FEK 187/A/10-11-1994

³⁹ NOMOS 2250/1994 - FEK 187/A/10-11-1994

⁴⁰ P., D., Karanou, 2010, p. 29

⁴¹ M., Karagiannis, 'I Rosiki Exoteriki Politiki sta metacommunistika Valkania', in I. Armakolas, Th., P. Dokos (ed.), *Apo ta Valkania sti Notioanatoliki Evropi: Prokliseis kai Prooptikes ston 21o Aiwna*, Publications: I. SIDERIS, 2010, p. 229

⁴² D. A. Floudas, 2019, 297

⁴³ US Relations With North Macedonia, *US Department of State*

⁴⁴ M., Nimetz, 2020, p. 207

In fact, the role of the USA was particularly active with regard to the Cyprus Issue. Washington continued to exert pressure for the creation of a federal state while expressing their reservations regarding the “Greece –Cyprus Joint Defense Doctrine” proposed by Andreas Papandreou and Glafkos Clerides⁴⁵. However, Moscow's stance was also significant in the handling of the Issue. The Russian side invoked international law to oppose the "dialogue" between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots promoted by the international community⁴⁶. Since the early 1990s, Russia had developed close relations with Cyprus not only at the political level but also economically. Russian tourists increasingly flocked to Cyprus, contributing to 11% of the island's income through tourism⁴⁷.

On the other hand, energy diplomacy continued to grow in importance. The signing of the Energy Charter Treaty and Protocol in 1994 contributed decisively to the realization of many energy projects, including the Yamal - Europe pipeline designed to transport natural gas from Russia to Germany⁴⁸, the AMBO (Albania - Macedonia - Bulgaria Oil) pipeline intended to carry oil from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast to Albania and the K1yiköy – Ibrikbaba pipeline, linking Turkey's Black Sea coast (K1yiköy) with Ibrikbaba on the Aegean Sea⁴⁹. The new institutional energy framework significantly facilitated the “entry” of many states of Eastern and Southeastern Europe states into energy diplomacy. Moreover, as specifically stated in the Press Release by the Greek Ministry of Industry, Energy and Technology, the signing of the Energy Charter aimed to encourage the participation of all countries - especially Russia and the former Soviet Republics - in an economic and energy cooperation⁵⁰.

At the same time, beyond the energy dialogue, the decade witnessed crucial changes in the structure of the European Economic Community (EEC). The

⁴⁵V., Coufoudakis , Greek-Turkish Relations In The Post-Cold War Era: Implications Of The American Response, *THE CYPRUS REVIEW* , vol.9, is.1, 1997, p. 12

⁴⁶C. Malakopides , *RUSSIA - CYPRUS RELATIONS: A Pragmatic Idealist Perspective* , Publications: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 76

⁴⁷ Y. Nikitina, D. Kuznetsov, L. Rustamova , ' Diplomatic Relations between Cyprus and the Soviet Union/Russia: From Cold War Games to Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation', *Cyprus Review* , 2019, p. 198

⁴⁸Explainer: Stuck in reverse? Russia's Yamal -Europe gas pipeline, *Reuters* , 2021

⁴⁹I., N., Grigoriades , 'I Notioanatoliki Evropi os komvos metaphoras Energeias: Epidraseis sti Perifereiaki kai Ethniki Asfaleia ', in *Apo ta Valkania sti Notioanatoliki Evropi: Plokliseis kai prooptikes ston 21o aiwna* , Thanos Dokos , Ioannis Armakolas (ed.), Publications: I. SIDERIS, 2013, p. 243

⁵⁰ Deltio Typou , Ypourgio Viomichanias Energeias kai Technologias , Simitis Foundation, 20/12/1994

Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992 and the establishment of the European Union, provided for the economic convergence of the member states through a monetary union, as well as the development of a common policy for the management of international issues⁵¹. The Maastricht Treaty established an institutional framework that promoted fiscal discipline, while participation in the European Monetary Union became a key requirement for achieving price stability⁵².

Intervening variables

Before assuming the prime ministership, Papandreou had adopted a radical rhetoric regarding the Macedonian Issue and the stance of European partners, influenced both by his personal convictions and by the mobilization of public opinion, the Orthodox Church, and the media⁵³.

Despite PASOK receiving the people's "vote of confidence", it was presented as a new PASOK whose radicalism of previous years had assumed a more patriotic tone, one that, however, was intertwined with the demand for "modernization". The resulted in internal party conflicts and the emergence of rivalries that influenced the party's foreign policy, creating new dynamics. More specifically, some members, most notably Costas Simitis, advocated for the renewal of the party's political agenda with European integration as a primary objective⁵⁴. This aspiration opposed the political choices of Andreas Papandreou, who, in 1994, imposed an economic blockade of FYROM, further straining relations with European partners⁵⁵. Nevertheless, Papandreou's brand of socialism, which included a warmer stance towards Russia - as had been evident during his prime ministership in 1985⁵⁶ - had begun to internal party dynamics, the international situation, and his own deteriorating health.

⁵¹ Maastricht Treaty of European Union, EUROPEAN UNION, Article 2

⁵² A., Trantidis, *Clientelism and Economic Policy : Greece and the crisis*, Publication: Routledge . Talor & Francis, 2016, p. 97

⁵³ Y. Kechagiaras, ' Why did Greece block the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? An Analysis of Greek Foreign Policy Behavior Shifts', *Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe*, no. 58, 2012, p. 7

⁵⁴ M., Spourdalakis, Ch., Tassis, p. 501

⁵⁵ A., Zervaki, ' Ellinikh exoteriki politiki kai Diethneis Organismoi : Mia diachroniki schesi se anazitisi enos neou afigimatos', in P. I. Tsakwnas and Th. P. Dokos (ed.), *SYNCHRONI ELLINIKH EXOTERIKI POLITIKI. Paragontes Diamorphosis kai Mesa Askisis*, Publications : I. SIDERIS, 2019, p. 200

⁵⁶ C., Bohlen, ' Papandreou Ends Visit The U. S. S. R. Greek Premier Ask Space Weapons Ban ', *The Washington Post*, 1985

The continuation of this trend was embodied by Karolos Papoulias, who as Minister of Foreign Affairs sought to establish a balanced stance for Greece in its international cooperation. Papoulias pursued a policy dialogue and cooperation with the Balkan states. Regarding relations with Russia, he viewed the Greek-Russian rapprochement as essential, believing that both Russia and the United States were important allies for Greece's trajectory⁵⁷.

On the other hand, Costas Simitis, as Minister of Industry and Trade, was striving to modernize the structure of the Greek economy. However, his disagreements with Andreas Papandreou led to his resignation in 1995. This development was also influenced by the earlier organization of the so – called “Dinner of Four” – a meeting between Costas Simitis, Vasso Papandreou, Paraskevas Avgerinos and Theodoros Pangalos - which aimed to discuss the recovery and reconstruction of PASOK through a policy of modernization⁵⁸.

Dependent Variables

Relations with Russia continued primarily in the energy sector. In 1994, a Memorandum was signed between Greece, Russia and Bulgaria for the construction of Burgas -Alexandroupolis pipeline⁵⁹. Furthermore, in April 1995, 11 officials from Black Sea countries gathered for a three-day conference in Athens. Representatives from Greece , Russia, Georgia, Albania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey convened to explore ways to accelerate their economic relations and to lay the groundwork for subsequent discussions to be held by the Foreign Ministers of the involved countries⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Karolos Papoulias : Einai Paralogi i daimonopoiisi tou Milosevic apo ti Dysi , *TA NEA* , 1999

⁵⁸ Kostas Simitis ' Biography, *KWSTAS SIMITIS*

⁵⁹ K., D., Kentrotis , 1997, p. 290

⁶⁰ Black Sea grouping begins Athens meeting, *UPI* , 1995

Karolos Papoulias chaired the subsequent conference engaging in talks with his Russian and Bulgarian counterparts regarding the construction of the pipeline⁶¹. In the same year, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a meeting with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev announced in Thessaloniki that the central focus of their discussion was the acceleration of the pipeline's constructions and the continuation of energy cooperation between the two countries⁶².

However, relations between Athens and Moscow were also significantly influenced by the actions of Costas Simitis. As head of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Technology, laid new foundations of the existing energy agreements with Russia. A notable aspect of this new approach was the upcoming discussion in Athens, prompted by the visit of the Russian Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs S. Davidov regarding the amendment of the Agreement between Mitsotakis and Yeltsin (1/7/1993), which was known as the Appendix to the Interstate Agreement on the Supply of Natural Gas to Greece (7/10/1987)⁶³. These amendments aimed to impose restrictions on Russia's role, particularly its attempts through Gaprom to control DEPA (Public Gas Enterprise), as well as to control the power plant in Greece via the B.O.O. (Built - Own - Operate) system through which the Russian company would assume ownership, organization and operation⁶⁴.

Costas Simitis Government: 1996 – 2004

Independent Variables

In the early 1990s, the relationship between Russia and Turkey was not particularly warm. The primary reason for this was Turkey's attempt to expand its influence in the former Soviet republics, driven by the presence of Muslim minorities in those regions. By the middle of the decade, relations between the two countries remained tense with Turkey accusing Russia of supporting the PKK movement, while Russia accused

⁶¹ Black Sea grouping begins Athens meeting, *UPI*, 1995

⁶² Oi scheseis apo to 1993 eos simera: I proti episkepsi Putin sto Agio Oros me ton Karamanli, *huffingtonpost*, 2016

⁶³ Deltio Typoy, Ypoyrgio Viomichanias Energeias kai Technologias, 13/12/ 1994

⁶⁴ Deltio Typoy, Ypoyrgio Viomichanias Energeias kai Technologias, 13/12/ 1994

Turkey of supporting Chechen separatists⁶⁵. However, despite these tensions, the two countries began to develop an energy cooperation, which in 1997 led to the signing of an Agreement for the construction of the Blue Stream, through which natural gas would be transported from Russia to Turkey. Specifically, the pipeline would "cross" the Black Sea, starting from Russian territory to Samsun, before continuing via an overland route to Ankara⁶⁶.

On the other hand, relations between Turkey and the United States continued to be characterized by a climate of cooperation. Moreover, Bill Clinton's intervention was decisive in resolving the Imia Crisis of 1996. Through his efforts, a solution was reached to address this event of the utmost national and international significance. Even towards the end of the 1990s, in 1998 Abdullah Ocalan was arrested in Kenya of American intelligence services⁶⁷.

As for Europe, the European Union continued to expand with the accession of new member states, while simultaneously focusing on the inclusion of Eastern European states as outlined in the Treaty of Amsterdam signed in 1997⁶⁸. Furthermore, in 1998, the Energy Charter Treaty came into force⁶⁹, and in 1999, the third and final stage of EMU implementation began with the introduction of the euro and the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact⁷⁰. Additionally, in the same year, the Helsinki European Council approved the recognition of Turkey as a candidate member state of the European Union⁷¹.

The early 2000s were marked by the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York. This event shifted America's focus almost entirely to the Middle East, resulting in the shaping of relations between Washington and Ankara based on Turkey's growing economic and political influence in the region⁷². At the same time, the election of President Vladimir Putin inaugurated a period for Russia focused on strengthening the country's energy policy. Specifically, the new President sought to

⁶⁵E., Balta, 'From Geopolitical Competition to Strategic Partnership', *International Relationships Council Economic İşletmesi*, vol. 16, no. 63, 2019, p. 75-76

⁶⁶G., Bacik, 'The Blue Stream Project, Energy Co-operation and Conflicting Interests', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2001, p. 88

⁶⁷S., Demir, 'ANALYSIS of TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS POST-1990s', *Karadeniz Research*, vol. 21, 2024, p. 76

⁶⁸Summary of The Amsterdam Treaty, EUROPEAN UNION

⁶⁹The Energy Charter Treaty, INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CHARTER

⁷⁰Oikonomiki kai Nomismatiki Enosi, EVROPAIKH TRAPEZA/EVROSYSTHMA

⁷¹Briefing No 7, Turkey and relations with the European Union, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

⁷²Turkey (Türkiye)-US Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context, *Congressional Research Service: Informing the legislative debate since 1914*, 2024

implement a strategy known as the "Putin Doctrine" through which Russia would aimed to restore its position as a dominant "player" on the international stage⁷³. In this context, Russia intensified all the energy projects initiated in the previous decade, while also forging agreements for new ones. In addition, during Putin 's Presidency, Moscow recognized the value of Europe as a significant ally. In 2003 Russia and Europe agreed to further develop their relations in areas such as the economy, security, education and science, jointly adopting an action plan to achieve their goals⁷⁴.

Intervening Variables

After the conclusion of the two-year period from 1993 to 1995 and the death of Andreas Papandreou due to health complications, PASOK continued along the path it had begun to chart. Internal divisions within the party persisted and became increasingly evident in the shaping of its foreign policy. The modernizing faction remained active with Costas Simitis, as its main representative, while the patriotic faction rallied around Akis Tsochatzopoulos and Gerasimos Arsenis⁷⁵. More specifically, A. Tsochatzopoulos led the group of "presidentialists", who sought to preserve of Andreas Papandreou's political legacy, whereas G. Arsenis headed the "reformers" who advocated for social level targeting traditional PASOK voters⁷⁶.

During Costas Simitis's first term as party president and subsequently as prime minister, issues related to the energy sector were, to some extent, placed on the back burner. This was a period when Greek-Turkish relations had become a top priority on the national agenda. Both Akis Tsochatzopoulos and Gerasimos Arsenis supported the Greece –Cyprus Joint Defense Doctrine⁷⁷. A stance that further strained relations with Turkey during an already tense period, particularly in light of the Imia crisis.

On the other hand, Costas Simitis pursued the realization of a European vision, aiming to address national issues through the lens of Europeanism. To this end, he sought to normalize Greek-Turkish relations by supporting Turkey's accession to the

⁷³ M. Karagianni , ' Diastasi tis energeias stis ellinorosikes scheseis ', in *Synchroni Ellada kai oi Ellinorosikes Scheseis*, Panagiota Manoli (ed.) , Publications: GUTENBERG, 2025, p. 232

⁷⁴The EU and Russia: Locked into confrontation, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, p. 2

⁷⁵S., Verney , 'Greece: A New Era', *Mediterranean Politics* , vol. 2, no. 1, 1997, p. 197

⁷⁶K. Featherstone, D. Papadimitriou, *The Limits of Europeanization: Reform Capacity and Policy. Conflict in Greece* , Publication : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 14

⁷⁷D. Constaas , 1997, p . 38

European Union. Simitis believed that such an undertaking would steer Turkey towards a European orientation and curb its revisionist policies concerning issues that affected relations between the two countries⁷⁸.

Dependent Variables

Despite the escalation of Greek-Turkish tensions "brought about" by the Imia Crisis, Athens sought to develop a new strategy towards Ankara. Specifically, the objective was the normalization of Greek-Turkish relations, which was initially formalized by Greece's decision to accept the US proposal for Confidence Building Measures (CBR) aimed at regulate tensions between the two countries in the Aegean⁷⁹. This effort was further reinforced by the signing of the Madrid Agreement, through which the leaders of Greece and Turkey committed to maintaining good neighborly relations based on International Law and to avoiding unilateral actions⁸⁰.

However, these initiatives did not enjoy the full support of the Party, particularly from the patriotic faction, which opposed a pro-Western orientation and sought to maintain PASOK's traditional rhetoric as articulated by Andreas Papandreou. Shortly before the signing of the aforementioned agreements, Cyprus had preceded with the purchase of a Russian missile system. The support provided by Russia to the Greek Cypriots energized PASOK's patriotic faction, with Gerasimos Arsenis, during his visits to Cyprus, emphasizing that the island was Greek and subsequently negotiating the purchase of the S – 300 RMU 1 missiles system from Russia⁸¹. This was not endorsed by the political leadership in Athens, at a time when Costas Simitis was focused on normalizing Greek-Turkish relations. The acquisition of the missiles provoked a strong reaction from Ankara prompting Costas Simitis, after consultations with Glafkos Clerides, to agree to transfer the missiles to Crete. This decision sparked tensions between the two leaders, as Clerides later claimed, that the purchase

⁷⁸D. Triantaphyllou, 2018, p. 113

⁷⁹Greece and Turkey: Aegean Issues — Background and Recent Developments, Congressional Research Service, 1997

⁸⁰[Madrid Declaration], joint communique on Greek-Turkish relations, July 8th, 1997, Türkiye-Yunanistan In their relationships Deniz Yetki Area Disputes, 2018

⁸¹Ath. Karsera, Countdown to Climdown, *Cyprus Mail. Archives*, 1998

of the missiles had been carried out with the knowledge of the Greek Ministry of Defense⁸².

However, Costas Simitis maintained relations with Moscow by establishing the Greek DEP-Thrace consortium for the construction of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline in 1998⁸³, the same year in which the Energy Charter Treaty entered into legal force⁸⁴. PASOK's political leadership remained committed to a European orientation and bilateral relations between the two countries continued within this framework.

Diplomatic discussions with Russia persisted during Vladimir Putin's presidency. In 2001, during Prime Minister Costas Simitis's visit, he emphasized the importance of cooperation between the two states, as well as between Russia and the European Union, particularly in the economic sector. Subsequently, Vladimir Putin underscored the need to continue work on Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline and expressed Russian willingness to support its completion⁸⁵.

Costas Karamanlis Government: 2004 – 2008

Independent Variables

In the mid-2000s, diplomatic engagement between Russia and Turkey intensified. In statements made in 2004 Russian President Vladimir Putin noted that the construction of the Blue Stream pipeline had been completed and highlighted Turkey's geographical significance for the development of energy projects. He further emphasized the goal of constructing natural gas storage facilities to supply Third Countries by developing routes that bypasses the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits. According to Putin, Turkey had become an important partner for Russia and the tensions of the previous period were now considered a thing of the past⁸⁶.

⁸²O apocalypticos dialogos Simiti – Cleride gia tous S-300 to 1998', Geopolitico , 2025

⁸³M. Karagianni , 2025 , p . 230

⁸⁴I. Mironova , *Russia and the Energy Charter Treaty* , INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CHARTER, 2014

⁸⁵Grafeio Typoy Prothypourgou , Moscha , 2001

⁸⁶Responses to Questions from Russian Journalists, President of Russia, 2004

At the same time, Turkish-American relations remained strong due to the conditions in the Middle East and the two states' shared goal of combating terrorism⁸⁷. In 2006, the two countries concluded a bilateral agreement in which they committed to maintain stability in the Middle East region, as well as addressing issues such as the Arab-Islamic conflict, the elimination of the PKK , and the Cyprus Issue, which was to be resolved according to UN proposals⁸⁸.

Regarding the Cyprus Issue, Kofi Annan's proposal for the creation of a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation was officially presented in 2004. The draft plan stipulated that, regardless of its acceptance, Cyprus would join the European Union in 2004. However, if the Annan Plan was not implemented, Cyprus' EU membership would only apply to the Greek Cypriot side of the island, without affecting the procedures Turkey's accession process to the European Union⁸⁹. Just before the referendum on the Annan Plan, Russia vetoed the US and UN proposal for a Mission to Implement the Cyprus Reunification Agreement, arguing that such an action could influence the referendum's outcome⁹⁰. However, the Plan was not implemented as 65% of Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of it while only 24% of Greek Cypriots did⁹¹.

Intervening Variables

With the election of New Democracy, the crucial role of key individuals in shaping foreign policy became evident. Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis sought to reframe national issues concerning Athens and Ankara, at a time when Turkey was gaining recognition from the Western world. Indeed, as already pointed out in the existing research, Karamanlis moved to redefine relations with Turkey and placed the regulation of Greece's EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) at forefront of his political agenda⁹².

In fact, regarding Turkey's relations with the EU, he had emphasized that these were directly linked to the resolution of the Cyprus Issue, which needed to be settled

⁸⁷ Remarks by President Bush and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan in Photo Opportunity, *THE WHITE HOUSE: President George W. Bush* , 2004

⁸⁸ S., Demir , 2024, p. 82

⁸⁹ The Annan Plan and the Sovereignty of Cyprus, AMERICAN HELLENIC COUNCIL of California

⁹⁰ Th., Grigoriadis , VI ., Iordanidis , Greek – Russian Relations I: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy, *ELIAMEP*, no. 54, 2014, p. 7

⁹¹ The Annan Plan and the Sovereignty of Cyprus, AMERICAN HELLENIC COUNCIL of California

⁹² D. Triantaphyllou , 2018, p . 113

immediately. However, this did not imply a reinstatement of the Annan Plan, as he argued that such a move would show "that some people have learned nothing from history"⁹³. It is clear that Costas Karamanlis pursued a policy that was not particularly aligned with European priorities, as evidenced by his leadership's lack of response to several recommendations of the European partners, especially the areas as fiscal policy⁹⁴. Karamanlis also differed from Europe on matters of international importance, maintaining a more passive stance regarding the process of Turkey's accession process. He responded positively to the start of the accession negotiations without requiring the resolution of bilateral disputes (Turkey - Greece) as stipulated in the Helsinki Agreement⁹⁵.

In this new approach, a key ally was the Church, and specifically Archbishop Christodoulos. Since 2000, in the context of the "battle of identities", strongly the Orthodox Church had opposed to the principles of Europeanism, with Archbishop Christodoulos asserting that the values of the East are universal and that it is the duty of the Orthodox Church to promote the moral values that should underpin European thought and understanding⁹⁶. At the same time, the Holy Archdiocese of Athens had developed communication ties with Moscow and Vladimir Putin. During his trip to Athens in 2001, the Russian President visited Archbishop Christodoulos, who presented him with his own agenda, highlighting the need for cooperation between Greece and Russia, while Sergei Ivanov, the Defense Minister accompanying Russian President, emphasized the two countries shared common geostrategic interests and challenges⁹⁷.

However, beyond the action of the political leadership, business groups in Greece were once again mobilized and took active role in the construction of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. Prior to the decision to approve the Declaration of Cooperation in the energy sector, the Initiative Group of Companies which would be involved in the construction of the project and the signing of the tripartite

⁹³Turkey's EU path depends on solution of Cyprus problem, Financial Mirror, 2009

⁹⁴A., Kalaitzidis , N., Zachariadis , 'Greece's Trouble with European Union Accession', Cahiers de la Méditerranée , 2015, p. 74

⁹⁵HELSINKI EUROPEAN COUNCIL: Presidency Conclusions, 1999

⁹⁶A., Sakellariou , ' Investigating fundamentalist trends in the Orthodox Church of Greece: Balancing between traditionalism and fundamentalism', *Journal for Religion, Society and Politics* , vol. 7, 2022, p. 74

⁹⁷G., E., Trantas , The Vision of the ' Byzantine Commonwealth ' as Model for Religiocultural Diplomacy and the Case of the Greek Orthodox Church under Archbishop Christodoulos (1998 - 2008)', *Politics, Religion & Ideology* , 2020, p . 39

Memorandum of Cooperation was established in January 2005 and April 2005 respectively⁹⁸. The companies participating in the Initiative Group included, on the Greek side, the HELPE Group, the Latsis Group and the Copelouzos Group, on the Bulgarian side, Universal Terminal Burgas AD and BURGAGAS and on the Russian one TKN – BP , Gazprom and Gazprom – Neft⁹⁹. These companies exerted pressure on their respective governments to implement the project, while playing an active role in the negotiations concerning the financial issues that would arise from its implementation. One year after the signing of the tripartite Memorandum, the Initiative Group of Companies held a meeting in Moscow to discuss all the financial matters related to the project. The consequence of this was the continued involvement, of business groups in further promoting the financial interests that would arise from this cooperation¹⁰⁰.

Despite the fact that Costas Karamanlis developed a different approach to Foreign Policy, there were influential political figures within the Party who sought to counterbalance this policy. Specifically, when Dora Bakoyannis replaced Petros Molyviatis at Minister of Foreign Affairs, she pursued a more outward-facing policy oriented towards Europe and America, focusing on resolving national issues, particularly Greek-Turkish relations, through constructive dialogue¹⁰¹.

Dependent Variables

Karamanlis' approach to managing national issues differed significantly from that of the previous period, as he did not prioritize dialogue with Turkey from a European perspective. Instead, he initiated a series of discussions mainly on the Cyprus Issue with President Putin, noting that their views on the settlement of the issue were aligned¹⁰².

The new approach that New Democracy began to develop during its time in government was formalized through a series of agreements signed between Greece

⁹⁸ Greece, Russia, Bulgaria move closer to building Burgas-Alexandroupoli pipeline, *Embassy of Greece* , 2005

⁹⁹ Krisimes epicheirimatikes epafes gia ton agogo Burgas – Alexandroupoli , *Kathimerini* , 2006

¹⁰⁰ Krisimes epicheirimatikes epafes gia ton agogo Burgas – Alexandroupoli , *Kathimerini* ,, 2006

¹⁰¹ Speech of Foreign Minister Ms. Dora Bakoyannis to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs , *Hellenic Republic Ministry of Affairs* , 2006

¹⁰² President Vladimir Putin met with Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, President of Russia, 2005

and Russia at a meeting between the two countries' leaders in 2004. These agreements included the Political Declaration for Further Deepening Greek-Russian Relations, the 2005-2006 Action Plan and the Joint Declaration against Terrorism between Vladimir Putin and Costas Karamanlis¹⁰³. Additionally, the cooperation between the two states was cemented with the signing of a Creative Agreement for the continuation and completion of Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. This agreement, signed in 2007 in Athens between Greece, Bulgaria, and Russia stipulated that the project would commence in 2008 and be completed in 2011¹⁰⁴.

In fact, the expansion of Greek-Russian relations in the energy sector was formalized with the agreement signed by Costas Karamanlis for Greece's participation in the proposed South Stream Gas Pipeline, which would transport natural gas to Europe via the Balkans¹⁰⁵. This agreement would further strengthen Greece's position, turning it into a significant hydrocarbon hub. However, like Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline, the project did not succeed. Regarding the South Stream and the Russia's increasing penetration into Greece, the US response was strong. To balance relations between Greece and the US, the role of politicians such as Dora Bakoyannis was crucial. During her tenure, Dora Bakoyannis supported the development of Greece into an "energy hub of regional importance", as she had pointed out¹⁰⁶. However, her attitude towards the Russians was more restrained. During her time in office, she sought to balance Greece's relations with the EU and the US. In fact, in a speech at CSIS in Washington, she stated that both Europe and NATO guarantee international balance and for this reason Athens' commitment and closer cooperation with them are deemed essential¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰³ Межгосударственные relationship Russia and Greece . Справка , RIA NEWS

¹⁰⁴ Y., Christidis , I., Armakolas , P., Paschalidis , 'Greek – Bulgarian relations: Present State and Future Challenges', ELIAMEP, 2017, p. 34

¹⁰⁵ E., Karagiannis , 'Greek Foreign Policy towards the Black Sea Region: Combining Hard and Soft Power' , *Mediterranean Quarterly* , vol. 24, no. 3, 2013, p . 88

¹⁰⁶ M., Karagianni, 2025, p. 233

¹⁰⁷ Speech by Dora Bakoyannis at the CSIS, DORA BAKOGIANNI VOYLEFTIS CHANIWN, 2008

Conclusions

This article attempts to present the reasons why the foreign policy of all governments from 1990 to 2008 was not characterized by coherence. The developments that took place at the international level, combined with the internal dynamics they triggered, had a significant impact on the formulation of Greek foreign policy.

The end of the Cold War created new challenges for Greece, as the new geopolitical reality broadened the scope of national security issues. In particular, the changes in the balance of power and the emergence of United States as a dominant power led to the emergence of new transnational partnerships. On the other hand, Russia, as the "loser" of the Cold War, sought to regain its former power and gradually developed communication channels with both smaller and larger states primarily through the exercise of energy diplomacy, leveraging its vast hydrocarbons resources as a means of political influence.

Throughout these eighteen years, Greece's vacillation between the Powers of the East and the West becomes apparent. This ambiguous stance led to the rise of two dominant ideological currents within the Greek state. One current was centered around patriotic rhetoric and focused on the formation of a foreign policy that adhered to traditional values seeking to align Athens with other states. The other current was characterized by a liberal perspective with its proponents advocating for transnational collaborations that would encourage Greece's relationship with the West. Patriotic views were initially formulated by influential bureaucrats but also by powerful cultural elites, such as cultural associations and the Church. These groups looked to Russia as a strong ally with strong cultural ties, which they believed could provide greater support in resolving Greece's national issues. On the other hand, the business elites promoted the need for a more direct "dialogue" with Russia seeing the alignment with Russia's sphere of influence as closely tied to their economic interests.

It is undeniable that although Russia's involvement in Greek affairs was achieved to a certain extent, the alliance between Greece and Russia remained largely symbolic. Given that Greece remains a small state integrated into Western "blocs", its ability to form an alliance with Russia was limited, making the Athens – Moscow "dialogue" more a hopeful "wish" than a feasible political choice.

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