

Greek Naval Policy and Strategy, 1923-1932

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Abstract: Despite the relative stability of Mediterranean naval politics during the 1920s, Greece faced a number of challenges whose answer influenced decisively the force structure and training of the Greek Navy. The expected utility of Greek naval co-operation with a Great Naval Power, the state of Greek-Turkish relations and the increasing financial difficulties of Greece conditioned Greek naval development in the aftermath of the First World War. Having secured the naval co-operation of Britain and the good services of Latin shipbuilding and finance, Greece also succeeded in coming to a naval understanding with Turkey in 1930. The latter underwrote the flotilla navy concept which was adopted for budgetary as well as naval considerations. While British shipbuilders did not secure any big Greek naval tenders at the time, Britain maintained a substantial influence over Greek naval affairs through the good work of successive British naval missions to Greece.

Keywords: Greek Navy, British naval mission, Mediterranean naval situation, naval program, force structure, flotilla navy, capital ship, naval education, naval organization

I. Overview of the Mediterranean naval situation in the 1920s

The first century of modern Greek statehood was largely shaped by the irredentist aspirations of the Greek people. The Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) shifted their attention to the domestic consolidation of the Greek state and the defense of its territory against foreign threats. It is the aim of this paper to explore the naval dimension of the security policy of Greece at a point of fundamental readjustment of her priorities and capabilities in an internationally fluid environment.

In the aftermath of the First World War, the Mediterranean naval situation was conditioned by the pacifist and economic drive towards naval disarmament which was shared by the leading powers of the victorious coalition, the Entente. This took the shape of the Washington Naval Treaty of February 1922 which provided for a ratio of 5:5:3:1.75:1.75 in capital ships and aircraft carriers for Britain, the United States, Japan, France and Italy respectively.¹ The naval situation of the

Mediterranean was also conditioned by the territorial expansion of the British and the French Empires in its Eastern basin and the Italian predominance in the Adriatic.

The ramifications of these developments were quick to crystallize. Being centrally positioned in relation to the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, the seats of the potential naval contestants of Britain, the Mediterranean naval bases of Malta and Gibraltar hosted the majority of the Royal Navy, which had been freed from the prewar threat of the German Navy in the North Sea.² The agreeable Mediterranean environment, the potential, though remote, threat of Italy or France and, the long and, occasionally, troubled littoral that Britain controlled in that part of the world made the Middle Sea the favorite training ground of the British fleet between the wars.³ Concurrently, France attempted to nullify her relative loss of naval power vis-à-vis Italy, a loss that stemmed from the provisions of the Washington Naval Treaty, by reinforcing her navy with a substantial number of submarines and other light units. This, it was hoped, would secure the French control of, at least, the Western Mediterranean against Italian encroachments.⁴ France was helped in this by the political and economic restraints that precluded Italy from capitalizing before 1926 on the favorable provisions of the aforementioned Treaty.⁵

Notwithstanding the difficulties that the Italian state faced during the first half of the 1920s, neither France nor Britain went to war against it on the occasion of the Fiume Question and the Corfu incident. This was, partly, due to the fact that the Italian naval might was not seen as particularly threatening by the two Western Democracies. It was only when Mussolini, the Italian dictator, tried to substitute French influence in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean in the latter half of the decade that France dropped her policy of appeasing Italy in favor of a more energetic one.⁶ Even then, Britain was not worried by the gradual Italian ascendancy in the Mediterranean, since

as a source of trade, markets, investment and raw materials the British Empire West of Suez was of vastly greater significance than, say, the undeveloped and apparently unpromising Mediterranean. English business, to be sure, had substantial investments, in, for instance, Spanish mining, the Greek public debt, Egyptian cotton and the Suez Canal Company but none of these had the actual or potential importance of the capital invested in India, Burma, Malaya, the East Indies and.... China.⁷

Considering that the priority for the British was the Far East and Western Europe in the 1920s, British tolerance of contemporary Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean was understandable.⁸

II. Early Plans for the Interwar Naval Re-armament and Development of Greece, July 1923- November 1924

This concatenation of naval political parameters obviously worked for a fairly stable relationship between the major Mediterranean powers, and one would expect that peace and stability would characterize the contemporary naval policies of all coastal powers of that sea. However, the case of Greece was quite different. In the aftermath

of the First World War the Hellenic Kingdom emerged from the victorious coalition free from the Turkish naval threat and with a mission to supplement British naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. To this end, two British naval missions were successively invited to the country with the aim to advise, instruct and organize a Hellenic fleet along the flotilla navy lines, which advocated the advisability of building up a naval force structure of, primarily, light naval units in the narrow waters of the Aegean.⁹ The good work of these missions was partly undone by the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, the concomitant Republican Revolution in autumn 1922, and a couple of short-lived naval mutinies in summer 1924, the latter being largely caused by the political favoritism of naval promotions for June of that year.¹⁰ Concurrently, Greek naval policy backtracked, in principle, to the primacy of the capital ship which appeared to offer the most effective way of securing command of the Aegean against Turkey, in the absence, that is, of a naval disarmament accord between the two countries.¹¹ Greek trust in the reliability of the capital ship was logical in the sense that it reflected the majority view of contemporary, international, naval opinion, which held that the big guns that the capital ships carried still held supreme in any type of naval fighting across the word.¹² Be that as it may, the advocacy of the then Greek Minister of Marine, Voulgaris, of procuring a Greek battle-fleet of no less than 100,000 tons of displacement, a figure not much lower than the Washington quotas for the French and the Italian battle-fleets, was obviously misplaced;¹³ all the more so, considering the difficulties of the Greek economy after the end of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922.¹⁴

The capital ship proclivities of Voulgaris were fully shared by parliamentarian, retired admiral, Pericles Rediadis¹⁵ and, to a lesser extent, by the contemporary head of the Greek Naval Staff, Captain Agesilaos Gerontas, and the responsible naval committee headed by Captain Leonidas Kanaris. Another naval committee headed by Captain Dimoulis, who had recently served as vice-director of the torpedo service of the Greek navy,¹⁶ favored the procurement of submarines and destroyers on account of their increased reliability and, in particular, their affordable cost at a difficult time for the Greek economy. These considerations were also acknowledged by the Kanaris committee and Gerontas himself, whose fear of the future refit of the Turkish battle-cruiser *Yavouz*, (the ex-*Goeben*) and the potential reinforcement of the Turkish navy by Soviet naval units, resulted in putting forward a Greek naval program, which placed emphasis on refitting the war-torn Greek naval units and procuring three/four submarines, a submarine depot-ship, fifteen/twenty coastal motor boats, four destroyers, and a minelayer before the end of 1924. Gerontas also urged for the replenishment of naval stores, which were scarce, the reinforcement of the naval air service in personnel and materiel, the modernization of the naval wireless communications, and the development of the Salamis arsenal and its defenses.¹⁷ Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne (23 July 1923),¹⁸ the lifting of the embargo of sale of arms to Greece (August 1923),¹⁹ and the short-lived Italian occupation of Corfu in August-September 1923²⁰ steps were taken for the implementation of the aforementioned proposals. British sea power had played an instrumental role in thwarting Italian plans for commanding the Straits of Otranto by occupying Corfu,²¹ therefore it was natural that Messrs Samuel White & Vickers was given the contract for the extensive refit and re-armament of the four Greek destroyers of the *Leon* Class, involving the expenditure of some £360,000 in

November of the same year.²² The four ships were refitted in England and were ready for service in summer 1925.²³ The Government also announced its intention of getting rid of the two pre-dreadnoughts *Kilkis and Lemnos*, and a number of old torpedo and auxiliary craft.²⁴ In the event, two German built destroyers, *Keravnos* and *Nea Yenea* and two French built submarines, *Delphin* and *Xifias* were disposed of.²⁵ Finally the Greek Ministry of Marine filed a suit against the *Vulkan Werke* in which it was argued that the corresponding provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne and the development of naval technology since 1914 obliged the Greek Government to cancel its pre-war order for the still half-built battle-cruiser *Salamis*. It was also demanded that the German shipbuilders should return to Greece all advance payments which had been made to Vulkan for that purpose. The Mixed Tribunal that examined the case rejected the first of the Greek arguments and appointed a Dutch admiral to examine the technical side of the Greek suit.²⁶

Further steps would have been taken towards the completion of the Gerontas naval program before the end of 1924 had it not been, amongst other things, for the reorientation of Greek naval attention to the 1924 Rome Naval Conference and the contemporary Greek-Turkish negotiations over the institution of a ten-year “naval holiday” between the two countries. On the occasion of the aforementioned conference, whose aim was to expand the 1922 Washington Treaty limits to the minor Powers, “the Italian diplomacy succeeded in denying Spain and Greece any rival maritime role in the Mediterranean, although no minor Power could ever be a real match for Rome: Spain had sought to build 3 modern battleships along the 36,000-tons limit established with the 1922 Washington Treaty, while Greece too held similar ambitions. Both found themselves unable to fulfill their plans as the conference closed inconclusively thanks to the host's diplomacy.”²⁷ Illustrative of the ill-feeling that existed vis-à-vis Greece in Italian naval circles was, amongst other things, the naval war plans against a supposedly hostile Balkan Bloc (Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania) which were published in the 1924 book “For Italy's Efficiency” by the influential Commander Afredo Baistrocchi.²⁸

Greek readiness to settle with Turkey along the 36,000 tons battle-fleet limit, did not meet with success because Turkey would not accede to the Greek intention of building three modern battleships of the aforementioned cumulative tonnage.²⁹ This was logical given that the *Javouz* was the only capital ship with which the Turkish navy could be reinforced then. Notwithstanding the arguments of the Turkish Navy in favour of procuring more large surface units, the Turkish General Staff and army officer corps placed greater emphasis on the procurement of lighter and, therefore cheaper units. This was understandable considering the contemporary lack of Turkish funds and the Turkish involvement in overwhelmingly defensive land battles from the War of Tripoli of 1911 to the end of the Asia Minor Campaign in 1922. “In all these conflicts, friendly naval forces performed peripheral roles. As a result, the early Republican military mind saw, at best, a coastal defence function for the navy. In practical terms, the navy was treated as a natural extension of the army”.³⁰

In the aftermath of this failure Roussos, the Greek Minister of Marine, was obliged to explore ways in which the Greek navy could be strengthened. To this end, he enquired *Vulkan Werke* regarding the modernization of the half built Greek battle-cruiser *Salamis*, which earlier Greek administrations had declined taking delivery of.

The *Vulkan* reply was less than satisfactory but the Greek move probably facilitated the pronouncement of the Dutch Admiral in favor of the *Vulkan Werke*, which demanded the completion of the ship and the conclusion of this transaction.³¹ The year 1924 ended with the placement of a Greek order for two submarines from France.³²

III. The Webb Naval Mission to Greece December 1924-March 1925

The precariousness of Greek naval position, which was due to her unfavorable regional environment, was attenuated by considerable deficiencies in the Greek navy itself. The standard of Greek naval officers in naval navigation, wireless communication, signaling, torpedo and gunnery notably deteriorated because of the contemporary steep decline in fleet training.³³ This deterioration made necessary the invitation of a British flag officer to Greece, to study the naval situation of the country, and pronounce on the optimal force structure for the Greek Navy, since the Greek naval opinion had grown divided on that particular issue.³⁴ The prospect of a new British naval mission to Greece was agreeable to Milne Cheetham, the British Minister in Athens because it “would be of considerable utility to our trade in armaments.”³⁵ The corresponding view of the Admiralty was lyrical. It characteristically stated:

...There can be no question that the Greeks as a nation like and admire the British as they do no other people and that they honestly regard our Navy as incomparably the most efficient of all navies. If we fail to provide them with a Mission now they have asked for it, they will undoubtedly go to either France or America, which would be deplorable from the point of view of British prestige. Although such a contingency is probably very unlikely, Greece, in view of its geographical position, its long coast-line, good harbours and considerable mercantile marine, would prove a most valuable ally in the case of our being at war with a Mediterranean power. Even if Greece is a neutral in wartime it is much better that her benevolence should gravitate towards us rather than towards any other nation. In times of peace, a British naval Mission would obtain for the Mediterranean Squadron many facilities concerning the use of harbours, etc...³⁶

The first Labor Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay MacDonald, whose commitment to world disarmament was common knowledge,³⁷ saw additional advantages in lending a British Naval Mission to Greece:

It can scarcely be doubted that the successive British naval missions which have been present in Greece since 1911...have not only proved of great utility to the Hellenic navy, but have been of consider

able advantage to British political and strategic interests. Since the establishment of the Republic in Greece, the French Government have endeavoured and are still endeavouring to bring that country within their own orbit, and it is to be apprehended that if His Majesty's Government were to refuse this present request the Greek Government would apply to the French government for the expert naval advice of which they now stand in need. Such a contingency would not only be generally undesirable but would also be particularly inconvenient at a moment when we are endeavouring to discourage these small states from all unnecessary armament programmes...if our influence in Greek naval matters is to be superseded by French influence, the Greek Government will be encouraged to place further orders in France and build up a navy in excess of their actual needs. The presence of a British naval mission in Greece would go far to counteract this dangerous tendency...³⁸

After consultation between the Greek and the British authorities it was agreed that Vice-Admiral Webb, should proceed "to draw up a complete scheme of organization of the Greek Navy, (Staff, materiel, personnel, and the duties and establishments of every branch of the Service, including the Naval Air Service".³⁹ It was also agreed that the whole period of the contract should not exceed five months. During his stay in Athens, Admiral Webb meticulously studied Greek naval needs before producing a detailed scheme of organization, education and development of the Greek Navy, which he submitted to the Greek Government in mid February 1925.

A large part of Webb's lengthy report was devoted to the naval education of the Greek Navy. While not pressing for the introduction of interchangeability, which was actually abandoned in Britain at the time,⁴⁰ Webb advocated the concentration of all naval schools in two major complexes, the Cadet College at Piraeus (Scholi Naftikon Dokimon) and the Central Training Establishment at Poros. He concurred with the decision of the Greek Naval Staff to train together Engineer, Paymaster and Executive Cadets at the College because he held that "all officers should be drawn as far as possible from the same source, entered under the same conditions, and trained together, so far as the different duties they will be called upon to perform will allow."⁴¹ He also thought that the enlargement of the institution would soon become necessary, and that some room re-arrangement was unavoidable in order to keep separate the dormitories from the classrooms and both of them from the laboratories and the storehouses.⁴² Webb held a positive opinion of the overall organization and standard of studies at the Cadet College but warned against providing too theoretical instruction to its students. The need was also emphasized for more physical exercise of cadets and was pointed out that the college library had been neglected for years, therefore money was overdue for its expansion.⁴³

The Central Training Establishment at Poros was on the whole well conducted, proceeding on satisfactory lines and Webb hoped that it would develop further following its relocation to Salamis after the intended transfer of the Greek Arsenal to Scaramanga. The Signal School favorably impressed Webb both in technical efficiency and cleanliness; it was well equipped and arranged, and the training in all branches of signaling appeared very satisfactorily conducted. The Gunnery School was well organized too, though its equipment was becoming "rather out of date". A tendency was also noticed to fall behind the latest advances in the important study of Fire Control. The Gabier School was in a less satisfactory position while the training

in the Boys' School appeared to be satisfactory. The Engineers' school was in need of a proper place for the conduct of its courses, while the Torpedo School impressed Webb favorably. It was doing very well in spite of being handicapped by inadequate equipment, much of the instructional gear being out of date, and the space available being rather cramped.⁴⁴

Staff education in the Greek Navy was another subject which attracted the attention of Admiral Webb. It was generally held that a staff officer should enjoy freedom from the routine work of administration and maintenance in order to occupy himself with drawing up war plans, updating them and making all arrangements that can be made beforehand for carrying out the operations that would become necessary in war. Webb noticed with relief that this freedom was assured by the contemporary organization of the Naval Staff and that of the Ministry of Marine. However, the successful discharge of the duties of staff officers required familiarity with the Principles of War based upon a study of history and the art of War. This familiarity could only be attained through instruction and training that could be provided by a War College, whose establishment was overdue and from which officers of all ranks should benefit through their attendance of corresponding courses (specifically designed courses for cadets, ensigns, lieutenant commanders and senior officers). Webb envisaged the establishment of this school at Poros, which would initially offer only a Senior Officers' War Course. It would later expand its courses and have a building of its own.⁴⁵

The state of training of Greek naval officers was another area that was explored by Admiral Webb. He was best impressed by the officers of the Executive branch although they appeared in need of more practical training and experience at sea. Their lack of experience could be remedied, to some extent, by sending a few junior officers to serve in the sea-going ships of friendly Powers, and by sending others of higher seniority to study in the technical schools of those Powers. Webb further noticed that the training of the Engineer officers fell far short of the standard required, therefore considerable assistance from outside the Hellenic Navy was necessary until a scheme of naval engineering education had been in operation sufficiently long to produce qualified officers of the seniority necessary for the Directing Staff. The Medical officers were equally lagging behind the medical and hygienic progress of the world and the enlistment of the Heads of the Medical Profession in Greece would provide the only way of upgrading the state of Greek Naval Medicine. On the contrary, the Accountant Officers were up to the required standard but insufficient responsibility was vested in the Accountant Branch in the performance of accountant duties on board ship, and in the internal economy of the Branch generally.⁴⁶

Organizational issues were hardly ignored by the British Admiral. The full utilization of the Greek merchant marine in wartime attracted his attention, and he proposed the creation of a separate division of the Naval Staff which would be divided into two sections, one for matters of transport and requisitions and another for ships of the mercantile marine not under the requisition. He thought that it was important that the Greek Naval Staff would have a clear picture of the potential use of each one of the Greek merchant ships and their whereabouts. Webb also espoused the idea of controlling mercantile movements for defensive and offensive purposes in wartime through the appointment of Shipping Control Officers at the principal commercial

ports. Retired naval officers were thought ideal for the job which would demand, amongst other things, close co-operation with the Harbor Masters of lesser ports and the Intelligence Officers of their area. It was also important to persuade the Greek shipowners to fit their vessels in time of peace with the strengthening necessary to enable them to mount defensive armaments without delay on the outbreak of war. This armament would probably constitute the only safeguard of the Greek merchantmen against enemy action since the small number of Greek warships made impossible sparing ships to act as convoy for any merchant ships other than militarily important vessels such as troopships and naval auxiliaries. The attendance of special lectures, wireless drills between Greek men-of war and merchantmen, and the drawing up of detailed orders and instructions by the Naval Staff for merchant vessels in the war zone, convoy and signaling would go a long way towards preparing merchant mariners for any possible war eventuality.⁴⁷

Naval Intelligence was a similar and equally important organizational subject that attracted the attention of the British Admiral. Webb found that the Intelligence Department of the Naval Staff was organized on sound lines and that it required further development on those lines. Despite the fact that naval intelligence could come from a variety of sources, its best interpretation and utilization could be best trusted to selected retired executive naval officers, who resided near the posts they would occupy in wartime. It was thus suggested to organize a distinct intelligence system in the probable zone of naval operations, which would be divided up into intelligence areas, to the centers of which Intelligence officers would be appointed. The definition of areas and selection of centers would follow the position of the various telephone exchanges of the islands and coast towns on the mainland and that of any outlying wireless stations. The Intelligence officers should be exercised at their stations at least once a year, preferably at a time when the Greek fleet was carrying out manoeuvres. Given the importance that Webb placed to efficient intelligence gathering regarding the whereabouts of the *Yavouz* and the rest of the Turkish fleet, his corresponding detailed proposals were understandable.⁴⁸

The contemporary serious shortage of supply of officers and its consequences on the organization of the Greek Navy troubled the British Admiral. He attributed it, in large measure, to "war weariness" and suggested that some voluntary, non-political body on the lines of the English "Navy League" should be initiated with the help of the Government, in order to educate the Greek people on the merits and necessity of sea power.⁴⁹ Stability of appointments, which would ensure a career to those who enter the Navy, was another way of attracting people to it. Bearing probably in mind the constant changes of duty in the Greek Navy, owing to naval political considerations, and the damage made by this, Webb suggested two years as a reasonable period for officer's appointment in general. The British Admiral was also disappointed by much of what he saw in the Greek naval penal system. He called for the compilation of a book of "Naval Regulations" on the lines of the British "KING'S REGULATIONS AND ADMIRALTY INSTRUCTIONS", which would embody the laws of the country by which the conditions of service in the navy was governed, and the regulations under which the navy was administered. He recommended that men awaiting trial should not be sent to prison. He also thought best that those convicted of offences against discipline should be committed to a naval prison on the lines of

the British “Detention Barracks”; those convicted against the ordinary criminal laws should be sent to civil prisons.⁵⁰

With regard to the naval program of Greece Webb argued that this should attend to her war needs and geographic eccentricities. The physical fragmentation of the country and the inadequacy of her railway communications meant that the mobilization of the Greek army and its concentration at the desired points was essentially a question of sea communications. Moreover, the dependence of Greece on sea-trade for feeding her population, importing indispensable ammunition to wage war, and maintaining her credit necessitated the thorough protection of her sea communications.

Webb was in agreement with contemporary international orthodoxy which regarded the complete destruction of the enemy fleet in battle as the only certain method of securing freedom of sea communications. The Greek Navy could not realistically hope to destroy the superior Italian fleet, if it came to war between the two countries. However, facing down the Turkish Navy was another matter, not least because of the configuration of the probable theatre of operations, the Aegean.⁵¹ The latter, “being an archipelago allows for the organization of a very effective system of intelligence, whereby the enemy can be quickly located and dealt with. At the same time it affords numerous points of shelter for shipping, thus enabling vessels to be directed into ports at very short notice, and moved over unprotected parts of their voyage when it has been ascertained for certain that there is no enemy within striking distance.”⁵² It was necessary therefore to make provision for very complete reconnaissance of the whole theatre of operations by naval aircraft working in conjunction with the Greek fleet. Given suitable landing grounds (invisible from seaward so that it may not be open to direct bombardment) on certain Aegean islands equipped with a store of fuel, a small repair outfit and basic local defenses, the whole field of operations could be covered by aircraft working from the main base. Thus, there was no immediate necessity for the provision of aircraft carriers. Reconnaissance ought also to be supplemented by a system of local defense which should include, in the absence of costly, fixed defenses, carefully disposed minefields in shallow water, patrolling submarines further out, aircraft and submarine hunting vessels.⁵³

In addition to the reconnaissance system and local defenses, a striking force was indispensable, in Webb’s view, if the Turkish Navy was to be countered, and the Turkish sea-trade stopped. The strongest Turkish naval unit, the battle-cruiser *Yavouz*, could threaten Greek command of the Aegean if she was reconstructed, updated, and obtained foreign naval personnel to man her, as it was likely. Webb admitted that the most certain reply to the Turkish warship would be another battle cruiser of at least equal gun power and speed. Considering, however, the vast expense such a battle cruiser would be to Greece an increased number of destroyers, submarines and aircraft in the Greek Navy would do the job cheaper. Local defenses would protect vital points on the Greek coast from being bombarded by *Yavouz*, while aircraft reconnaissance and land intelligence would make continuously known her position to the Greek naval command. Consequently, Greek sea communication could be stopped and deflected as necessary, while the attacking forces, submarines by day and destroyers by night could be so disposed as

to attack to the best advantage. Torpedo and bombing aircraft would also attack *Javouz* all the time.⁵⁴

An additional Turkish naval threat to Greek naval communications was that of the light cruiser *Hamidieh*, which Webb thought that it could be best dealt with by a Greek cruiser of sufficient speed and protection against aerial and underwater attack. The possession of a cruiser by the Greek Navy would also facilitate its sea training by serving as target for dummy attacks by Greek naval aircraft and light units. It could also provide enough space for those directing and co-ordinating Greek naval exercises and provide accommodation for junior officers and men and boys under training. Turkish torpedo craft and submarines could also play an important role in a Greek-Turkish War. Given that Greek destroyer personnel were “second to none”⁵⁵ Greek destroyers could be relied upon to account for those of the Turkish Navy, provided that there existed some approximation to material equality of strength between opponents. On the other hand, the craft required to counter the Turkish submarine threat were destroyers and coastal motor boats with depth charges, hunting craft with hydrophones and aircraft with bombs.⁵⁶

Having generally surveyed the context within which Greek naval power was to evolve, Webb turned to specific recommendations regarding the best possible composition of the Hellenic Navy. The *Kilkis* and the *Lemnos*, the two American built pre-dreadnoughts should be disposed of owing to their slow speed, obsolete armament, lack of protection against underwater and aerial attack, and vulnerability to plunging fire.⁵⁷ On the other hand the *Averoff* should be retained for at least five more years provided that she received a thorough refit and was fitted with new boilers, extra armour protection over magazines, anti-flash protection, and improved under-water protection. Webb also recommended that the *Averoff* be fitted with director fire control for her guns and to burn fuel oil only. The expense for all this was estimated at, approximately, £260,000, which was a far cry from the £1,250,000 that the procurement of a new cruiser would require.⁵⁸ The cruiser *Helle* appeared, in Webb’s view, admirably adapted for conversion into a minelayer. This required that her armament was removed except for some guns to repel destroyers and aerial attack. Her engines should be thoroughly overhauled, her boilers would be renewed and designed for fuel oil only. The whole upper deck could then be transformed to carry mines both sides.⁵⁹

With regard to the existing destroyers of the Greek Navy, four of them, *Ierax*, *Panther*, *Leon* and *Aetos* could take their place in the striking force, while the *Smyrna*, *Thyella*, *Sphendoni*, *Lonchi*, *Aspis*, *Niki*, and *Velos* were quite equal to the task of hunting the smaller type of submarines, and also of assisting to search (and if necessary blockade), the enemy coasts. To this end, their torpedo tubes should be removed, and the vessels equipped with depth charges and anti-aircraft guns. The destroyers *Aigli*, *Alkyone*, *Arethousa*, *Daphne*, *Doris*, and *Thetis* were too small for any offensive operations but could prove, according to Webb, suitable for work as hydrophone vessels, at least the four, most efficient of them. They should retain only a light armament and an anti-aircraft gun and their torpedo tubes should be removed. The six torpedo boats of the *Pergamos* and *Broussa* Class were of very recent design and construction and appeared extremely well built, therefore they could be

usefully employed for anti-submarine duties. Finally, the existing couple of mine-sweeping vessels and the fleet repair-ship were well adapted for their work.⁶⁰

The final part of the Webb proposals on the force structure of the Greek Navy concerned the naval procurements that should take place before the end of the 1920s. Webb insisted that "in all future construction, and in any re-armament of existing vessels it is essential that the number of different caliber of guns on board any ship should be kept as low as possible. Similarly the number of caliber of guns in the Hellenic Navy should be reduced to the lowest limits, compatible with efficiency. This would achieve considerable economy and would also make for increased efficiency, in that officers and gunnery ratings would have an intimate knowledge of any guns with which they might suddenly be called upon to deal."⁶¹ He also recommended that any new Greek naval vessel should be designed to burn oil fuel only.⁶² With regard to the naval units needed by the Greek Navy, Webb argued that a second Greek cruiser might be necessary in the future and the procurement a flotilla leader *V* or *W* class destroyer as well as a division of four *S* class destroyers was considered indispensable. Six submarines were also required to maintain an observation patrol off the Dardanelles with a striking force deployed in the Aegean. Since two of them had already been ordered in France, Webb proposed ordering four submarines of the British *L 50* class (two in 1925 and two more in 1927). Four coastal motor boats of 37 knots speed, 55 foot size and a displacement of 11 tons were also required for operations against submarines and also for surprise torpedo attacks on large ships.⁶³ Several small craft would be required to lay groups of mines at short notice and two more pairs of mine sweeping vessels would be necessary at some future point.⁶⁴

The development of the Greek Naval Air Service constituted an integral part of the Webb naval program. For reasons of economy, efficiency, and checking French influence in Greek naval affairs, Webb did not agree with the intention of the Greek Government to amalgamate the Greek Naval Air Arm with its sister service and attach both of them to the Ministry of War as a separate branch.⁶⁵ He was adamant that the personnel of the Greek Naval Air Service should come from within the Navy and he emphasized the need for giving strong inducements to naval personnel to join it. He thought it important that the Naval Air Bases of Tatoi and Phalerum were kept up up-to-date.⁶⁶ The Greek Naval Air Service should also be reinforced with two squadrons of Medium Reconnaissance Machines (also available for torpedo attack and bombing) of twelve planes each, a squadron of two-seater fighters of the same strength, three long distance reconnaissance machines (also available for torpedo attack or heavy bombing) and three training and practice machines per squadron. A repair section with necessary equipment was necessary to be attached to each squadron and to the heavy machines. Up to 1926 half of the Medium Reconnaissance Machines should be constructed as seaplanes and half as land planes, while further experience of actual operations would determine their correct proportion. Of the Long Distance machines one was desired to be flying boat and the other two land planes.⁶⁷ Certain of these machines would be assembled at the Air Factory at Phalerum which had recently been taken over by the Blackburn Aeroplane Company following an open international competition.⁶⁸

The naval program that Webb put forward also touched the issue of the Greek arsenal at Scaramanga. The British admiral agreed with his predecessor, Vice-Admiral Kelly, that the position of Salamis Dockyard was inadequate in elementary facilities required of a dockyard (wharves, quays, basins, docks, cranes, lifting appliances), and that its shops were insufficient for the work required of them. Furthermore, its lack of communications, and the entire absence of connection with the railway network of the country caused a good number of labor difficulties and pushed up the cost of its running. Bearing in mind these deficiencies and the urgent necessity for replacement or repair of the existing establishments at Salamis, the creation of a new dockyard at Scaramanga commended itself.⁶⁹ However, Webb warned against developing it beyond the absolute needs of the Hellenic Navy, since no Great Power was interested in an advanced base there, as was erroneously thought in official Greek circles.⁷⁰

The work for the new arsenal, Webb argued, should be put out to contract, stipulating that Greek labor should be employed throughout with a minimum of British supervision. As the dockyard had been designed on the lines of British naval dockyards and the plans had been drawn by British engineers, the work of construction was better to be confided to a British firm, on grounds of efficiency and economy. A British civil engineer should scrutinize the tenders and supervise the work of construction and the organization and direction of the dockyard should be undertaken by a British officer with full experience in British dockyards. Webb also recommended certain reductions from the complete scheme as drawn up by Sir Edward Raban. He was not in favor of erecting a new cadet school or new barracks there, and he thought that the magazines should remain at Leros Island, some more underground magazines being provided. Pending completion of the new dockyard, no work of a permanent nature was advisable to be undertaken at Salamis except absolutely necessary repairs or renewals and provision of machinery, etc. capable of being transferred eventually to Scaramanga. Webb finally recommended that the "Costing System" introduced on the advice of Vice Admiral Kelly should be adhered to rigidly.⁷¹

Webb proposals regarding the naval program of the Greek navy followed closely Macdonald's wish not to encourage the Greek Government in any grandiose scheme of naval expenditure. Shortly before the submission of his proposals to the Greek Government, the British Admiral characteristically informed the Admiralty that his provision contained no capital ship or new cruiser and his recommendations for torpedo and submarine craft, aircraft and naval works were limited "to the absolute minimum that I consider consistent with the bare existence of the Hellenic navy as an effective force."⁷² He further noted that "If His Majesty's Government views this very moderate provision of naval force with disapproval that appears to me tantamount to disapproval even of the bare survival of the Hellenic navy."⁷³ In fact, his espousal of the procurement of submarines as a safeguard against the *Yavouz*, at a time when fleet manoeuvres of the American navy had demonstrated the inability of submarines to carry out successful attacks on heavy surface vessels except at night or under lucky circumstances, puts some doubt in the value of his scheme.⁷⁴

IV. The Careful Regeneration of a War-torn Navy, April 1925 – June 1928

In adherence to the recommendations of Vice-Admiral Webb, excited by the Patriarchal trouble in Turkey,⁷⁵ thoroughly convinced about the superiority of British naval armaments,⁷⁶ and in an attempt to combine an Anglo-Greek rapprochement with the procurement of a homogeneous and modern fleet in Britain the Greek Ministry of Marine made consistent efforts to secure British financial assistance. It was first tried to borrow from the British Government or get a loan approved by the British Government under the Exports Credit Scheme.⁷⁷ Failing this, it was then attempted to get a loan from some financial group as was approved by the British Government.⁷⁸ The British Treasury advised against this because the Geneva Protocol and the prospectus of the Greek Refugee Loan did not permit the Greek Government to create any charges on its revenues for military purposes. Moreover, under the War Debt Agreement Greece could not assign any such security without the assent of Great Britain, France and the United States (which would clearly not be forthcoming). Finally, if the Greek Budget had an available balance out of revenue, it was expected to make some payment on Greece's large war debts to the Allies. The Treasury concluded that neither the British Government would make a loan to Greece, nor could the Trade Facilities Act or the Exports Credit Scheme be available for the purchase of war material.⁷⁹ The sensitivity of the Treasury regarding the fiscal health and credit-worthiness of the Greek economy was understandable considering that two thirds of Greek foreign debt and the majority of foreign direct investment in Greece were held by British investors during the interwar years.⁸⁰

The Greeks were very much put out by their failure to obtain a loan in England and delayed the invitation of a new British naval mission to succeed the Webb one, in a further attempt to secure British financial assistance.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the forthcoming Greek naval tenders had attracted the interest of five British naval shipbuilders (Vickers Ltd., Sir W.G. Armstrong Whitworth Ltd., J & I. Thornycroft Ltd., Cammell Laird & Company, John Brown & Company). The first two were more interested in the construction of submarines for the Greek Government, and the last three were most interested in the construction of destroyers. Some of the British shipbuilders (i.e. Vicker's and John Brown) did not insist on any definite security or charge on specific revenue from the Greek Government in consideration of accepting the orders on deferred payment terms. In the case of submarines, destroyers and aeroplanes, the material would itself be of a saleable value in the event of the Greek Government defaulting.⁸² However, their being taken over by the Royal Navy was not considered probable, since this would necessitate the deletion of a similar number of vessels from any new construction program for vessels not of the very latest type.⁸³ John Brown in particular contacted the British Government with a view to securing financial assistance from it for the whole Greek project.⁸⁴ This amounted to five million pounds for which, at 10% annual appropriations of approximately £600,000, would be needed to pay off interest and sinking fund in approximately 20 years.⁸⁵

A provisional order was placed by the Greek Government with Messrs Brown & Coy. Ltd, Cammell Laird & Coy. Ltd, and Messrs. Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Coy.

Ltd. for four destroyers, four submarines and four coastal motor boats in July 1925. This was made conditional upon the extension of British financial assistance and, momentarily, placed the British shipbuilding industry in a most favourable position for securing future orders on the ground of homogeneity.⁸⁶ The Greek order would make a favorable impression on those sections of British government and public opinion who were either interested in arresting the decline of British shipbuilding, which followed the Washington Naval Treaty, or valued the importance of good bilateral relations for the Mediterranean position of Britain.⁸⁷ Its realization was also momentarily facilitated by the suggestion of the Overseas Trade Department that it would be possible to include the hulls and engines of the Greek warships under the Export Credits Scheme.⁸⁸

The suggestion fell eventually through owing to the general reluctance of the British authorities to compromise the spirit of the Trade Facilities Act. It was threatened instead that if Greece procured naval units from the Continent the British Government would expedite the repayment of the war debts that Greece had contracted in Britain.⁸⁹ It was also stated that unless the Greek Government procured in Britain a much lower but budgetary affordable number of naval units which Vicker's had undertaken to finance (two submarines, two destroyers, some mines and anti-aircraft guns)⁹⁰ "there will be no hope of their [the Greeks] obtaining any further loan on the London market. Moreover, if Greek Government were so shortsighted as to disregard our advice in this matter, we should be bound to take serious account of their action in the settlement of other questions affecting Greek finances..."⁹¹ alluding obviously to loans concerning the settlement of refugees and for development purposes like the Ulen one.⁹² These threats followed an implicit one ushered by Vice-Admiral Webb in January 1925 when he made the acceptance of Greek sub-lieutenants aboard British warships conditional upon the placement of Greek naval orders with British firms.⁹³

By far the most outspoken rejection of the repeated advances regarding the extension of British financial assistance to Greek naval procurements in Britain came from the Treasury. The latter characteristically argued that:

.....No-one in their senses supposes that anybody here is going to lend £2½ millions to John Brown, (which is what the proposition amounts to) on an unsecured lien of the Greek Government. There is no question of "official financial sanction"; it is simply a question of whether anybody in England is likely to be foolish enough to lend money for this purpose. I am quite convinced that there are no such fools in England and I should be considerably surprised if in fact there were any such in France. Whether an order, if placed, would be any help to British industry is a highly debatable economic proposition. Of course, if somebody gave John Brown £2½ millions, John Brown would be very happy to have £2 ½ millions, but if it came out of British pockets and was in fact not repaid by Greece, as is not unlikely, the benefit to British industry to the whole would be absolutely nil.⁹⁴

Wishing to avoid a serious breach with Britain the Greek Government delayed the placement of Greek naval orders for a while.⁹⁵ However, the advertised reconstruction of the *Javouz* meant that four submarines had been ordered from France for the Greek navy by the end of the year.⁹⁶ Both the size and the quality of the French-built submarines were, apparently, inferior to their British equivalents. Be that as it may, the extension of sufficient credit by the French and the low price of the

French submarines, which were half as cheap as the British ones, made their procurement a welcome alternative.⁹⁷ In fact, the Greek Minister of Marine confided to Rear Admiral Townsend, the successor to Vice-Admiral Webb that “what is good enough for France is good enough for Greece”.⁹⁸

The procurement of a submarine flotilla by the Greek navy in the mid-1920s was not the only Greek naval tender that was placed with French shipbuilders. Due to the favorable terms offered by them they also secured contracts for a training ship, the *Ares*, and the repairs of the *Averoff* and *Helle* in 1925. During the same year more Greek naval procurements and repairs took place or commenced: a contract was given to an Austrian firm for the repair of old torpedo-boats,⁹⁹ two coastal motor boats were procured in the Netherlands and Italy,¹⁰⁰ a formerly German cargo-ship was turned into a repair-ship in Britain, and six tugboats and six patrol boats were also procured.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the repairs of the pre-dreadnoughts *Kilkis* and *Lemnos* commenced at the Salamis Arsenal,¹⁰² as well as those of the six ex-Austrian torpedo-boats. Substantial work was also undertaken for the extension of the shops at the Arsenal and the dredging of its harbor. Finally, new machinery was ordered, torpedo and mine magazines and shops were erected at Scaramanga,¹⁰³ and unsuccessful negotiations were held between the Greek Government and the Austrian shipbuilder *Gant* for the establishment of a shipyard there.¹⁰⁴ Some credit for this work goes to the Admiral cum politician Alexandros Chatzikiriakos¹⁰⁵ and part of its cost, which amounted to two and a half million pound sterling,¹⁰⁶ was possibly covered by the 1925 discovery of certain, sizeable, forgotten bequests to the Greek Navy by late, expatriate tycoons.¹⁰⁷

Notwithstanding the speed with which the force structure of the Greek Navy was upgraded in 1925-1927, the placement of orders for destroyers developed into a drawn out and eventful process. Anticipating further Greek naval tenders, Cheetham discussed with Townsend the possibility of General Pagalos, the Greek dictator, taking over the Ministry of Marine himself. In Cheetham's view, Admiral Botassis, the then Minister of Marine, was more than half a Frenchman, therefore it was quite possible that some attempt might have been made to influence him against the British Mission which, in the mind of the French Representative in Athens, meant the exclusion of French industry from the larger naval contracts.¹⁰⁸ This course of action, if actually pursued by the British representatives in Greece, did not lead anywhere. On the contrary, Townsend's mission was terminated suddenly and ungraciously a few months later.¹⁰⁹

At the beginning of March 1926, the British Minister in Athens, Cheetham, unofficially learned that the Greek Government intended to invite tenders for two or four destroyers of about 1500 tons and 35 knots speed on the British pattern. Considering that British prices for these ships were substantially higher than the corresponding French or Italian ones it was thought advisable to make strong representations to the Greek authorities in favour of the British shipbuilding industry.¹¹⁰ But before these were made Pagalos intimated to Townsend that Greece would purchase British destroyers in preference to other foreign-built craft, even though the cost would be greater, provided that the British Government lent its assistance in procuring a satisfactory settlement (from the Greek point of view) of the *Salamis* question.¹¹¹ Apparently the Greeks were impressed by the utility of the

corresponding support of Lord Jellicoe,¹¹² the former C-in-C of the Grand Fleet, at the Ambassador's Conference,¹¹³ after the Greek Government sought to utilize its services.¹¹⁴

During its term in Greece the Townsend naval mission did not escape the turbulence of domestic politics; nor did the obsolete Greek naval materiel and the limited stocks of fuel and ammunition dedicated to fleet training facilitate its work.¹¹⁵ Be that as it may, it managed to implement a good number of the Webb recommendations. Under its supervision the limited knowledge of Greek officers in technical branches was significantly expanded and the training in naval tactics of the Greek light fleet was advanced. Moreover, a Naval War College was started at the request of the Greek Naval Authorities.¹¹⁶ Many difficulties had to be overcome, but eventually they were surmounted and the College was opened and provided sorely needed staff education to Greek naval officers for a short time. In January 1926 Botassis signed an order for the closing of the Naval War College, despite his earlier assurances to the contrary. Townsend protested energetically against this and had interviews with the President of the Republic, ex-Admiral Coundouriotis and the dictator, General Pagalos. Coundouriotis appeared greatly upset and begged Townsend to remain on, while Pagalos was, apparently, equally sympathetic and considered taking over the Ministry of Marine himself.¹¹⁷ In the end, the good work of the Townsend mission was prematurely interrupted, ostensibly, on ground of economy in May 1926.¹¹⁸

In autumn 1926, shortly after the fall of the Pagalos Dictatorship, a request was received from the Greek Government for a mission of "instruction and organisation" to the Greek fleet to include aviation officers for the general training of aviation personnel and to be under the orders of the chief of the Greek staff. The Charge d' affaires at Athens was anxious that the request should be acceded to but the Foreign Office was decidedly averse from sending any more missions to Greece, as there was no guarantee of the stability of the Greek Government, nor proof of any improvement in the Greek financial position. The Director of Naval Intelligence considered that an undertaking given by the British minister on withdrawal of the previous mission, that another would be sent if desired, should be honoured, and moreover that it was most desirable to retain and if possible increase British influence in Greece in matters of defence. The British Government eventually granted the Greek request on the understanding that the new British Naval Mission to Greece should be under a senior British officer (captain) and not under the orders of the Chief of staff as proposed by the Greek Government. In view of the treatment accorded to the Townsend mission the agreement was also made on lines which prevented any repetition of such treatment.¹¹⁹ A new contract was signed in January 1927 and Captain Turle was appointed Head of the Mission, with a staff of not more than nine officers. The purpose of the mission was advisory, for reorganisation and direct training of naval personnel. All officers held equivalent rank in Hellenic Navy.¹²⁰

Following the signature of its contract, the Turle naval mission to Greece focused on educating and training the Greek Navy,¹²¹ which was in a state of moral depression, due to political troubles and the absolute lack of sea training for almost a year, in consequence of the difficulties of the financial situation of Greece. The latter had led to a notable decrease in the budget of the Ministry of Marine between 1926 and

1930¹²². The War College was re-opened and Commander de Pass was appointed its Director of studies, being assisted in his duties by Greek officers who were fluent in English. A fleet summer cruise was also decided on and its program of tactical exercises was prepared by Turle. He and his staff, were also on board the flagship during the exercises, where he acted as umpire. The cruise proved satisfactory from a point of view of morale and was divided into three periods. The first commenced on 12th June 1927, the fleet proceeding from Phalerum to Chios. The second period commenced on 1st August and finished on 10th August, during which time Salonica and Volo were visited. More day and night exercises were carried out. The third and last period commenced on 2nd September and finished on 5th September. The fleet visited Syra, afterwards returning to Phalerum Bay. During the third period of the summer cruises, while carrying out a night exercise of abandoning and attacking an enemy convoy, a tug, representing a warship collided with one of the attacking destroyers, *Lonchi* and sank; the crew were rescued, but all efforts to keep the tug were unavailing.¹²³ This was one of many accidents that plagued the Greek Navy during the decade after the Asia Minor Catastrophe, owing to insufficient sea training of the Greek fleet.¹²⁴

The education and training of the Greek Navy were not the only aspects of Greek naval affairs which were affected by the contemporary financial difficulties of Greece. Its force structure equally suffered between 1926 and 1929, since only £600,000 were invested upon it.¹²⁵ No naval order for new construction was given but the boilers of *Lemnos* were repaired in order to show to the Greek public that their Government “was not remaining inactive under the threatened establishment of Turkish naval supremacy in the Aegean”.¹²⁶ Steps were also taken in 1926 for the establishment of a cheaper means of naval defence, a national coastal defence system, but this did not go much further than the publication of some of the required decrees and regulations.¹²⁷ The Naval Air Service was also left far behind requirements, overshadowed by its sister Army service and burdened with an uneconomic airplane factory at Phalerum. In fact, the five squadrons of the Greek Naval Air Service had been reduced to negligible operations by 1928.¹²⁸

VI. The Venizelos Administration and the Maturity of Greek Naval Planning, July 1928 - May 1932

The return of Venizelos to power in summer 1928, after four years of self-imposed exile from Greece, marked the beginning of a fruitful series of arguments and decisions that generally defined Greek naval policy up to the Second World War. His Administration placed particular emphasis on the education and training of the Greek Navy in an attempt to maximize its war efficiency. Sports and athletics were promoted and *Ares*, the recently procured training ship sailed to America three decades after the last American visit of a Greek warship.¹²⁹ In fact, her visit to Portsmouth in September 1930 made such an impression that the revival of sail was raised by Admiral R.R.C. Backhouse. This was extensively discussed in the Admiralty over the next couple of years.¹³⁰

Fleet cruises and tactical exercises were also undertaken. On the 17th/18th June 1929 a combined operation was carried out at Port Mandri, with the object of investigating the practicability of the various types of landing craft employed, and the time taken for disembarking troops, animals and artillery. The naval forces employed were the *Averoff*, *Ierax*, *Aetos*, *Sphendoni*, *Thyella*, a transport and two tugs. The landing party consisted of fourteen officers, three hundred men, four guns and fifty seven animals. The whole forces left Keratsina Bay (Salamina) at night and arrived at Port Mandri before dawn.¹³¹ Lyon, the head of the new British Naval Mission to Greece since March 1929,¹³² and his staff were onboard the *Averoff*. Owing to various delays in the transport, the "first flight" did not leave for the shore until one hour after the intended time; it then being broad daylight. Submarines and aircraft also took part in the operation, attacks by the former being made before and after the landing. Many valuable lessons were learnt and many useful experiences gained from that exercise. During the remainder of June and July the training of the fleet proceeded on normal lines, a certain amount of gunnery firings and torpedo test runs being carried out.

On 12th August the Training Squadron, sailed from Phalerum Bay for a cruise round Morea and the Ionian Islands. The first few weeks were devoted to simple exercises and tactical drills; sea time, which was usually short owing to the need for fuel economy, being taken up with such exercises. It was clear from these earlier drills that destroyer officers were not being trained on the right lines. Several alterations were made in formations and method attack, and improvement was noticeable all round. No torpedoes were fired from surface vessels during the cruise, there being great fear of losing some; consequently the torpedo ratings at sea had little practical experience of keeping the torpedoes efficient onboard, and all the attacks carried out (in fifteen different exercises) were theoretical. Later on in the cruise schemes were carried out, but no attempt was made to try and go fast, and no complicated strategical schemes were attempted. Owing to need of fuel economy and shortage of engine room ratings the exercises were not carried out at more than three-fifth power. Several attacks and shadowing exercises were also carried out by the submarine *Papanikolis* during the cruise, the former being of a simple nature as she

had recently been recommissioned. 18-inch torpedoes were used in all attacks, a special arrangement being fitted in one of the bow 21-inch tubes of the submarine.¹³³ Towards the end of the year a certain number of gunnery firings were carried out, the *Averoff* carrying out her first full calibre night firing since 1923. All were under very easy conditions. Submarine training proceeded normally, diving exercises being carried out frequently and occasional attacks, but it was difficult to get a permanent vessel as a target ship.¹³⁴

Aircraft took part in some of these exercises, but these were not of any great value, as there was great difficulty in communication between aircraft and ships. During June and July, while the fleet was in Phalerum Bay, training was carried out in wireless telegraphy, Aldis lamp, and dummy torpedo attack, and when the Fleet sailed for the summer cruise a dummy torpedo attack was carried out by three seaplanes on *Averoff*, who was screened. Two flights of seaplanes also left Phalerum for Corfu on 3rd September, refuelling in Dragamesti Bay. The Director of Naval Air Service and staff took passage in the seaplanes and the lighthouse tender *Pleias* acted as tender. At Corfu a camp was established in Govino Bay with moorings for the seaplanes. The arrangements for making the advanced base and refuelling base were well carried out. Air exercises were carried out with the Fleet, consisting of sector patrols a dummy torpedo attack, and a convoy escort. The advanced base was dismantled and the seaplanes returned to Phalerum on 19th September 1929. On the day the Fleet returned from the cruise an unsuccessful combined torpedo plane and destroyer attack on *Averoff* took place. Furthermore, the training of pilots, wireless telegraphy operators, gunners, fitters and riggers also proceeded satisfactorily. Some straight runs had been obtained from torpedo-plane practice dropping, but the torpedoes themselves needed overhaul. Wireless reception and transmission improved, but were still unsatisfactory.¹³⁵

The contribution of the British naval mission in the development of gunnery in general in the Hellenic fleet was equally important. It became apparent from some of the destroyer firings witnessed early in summer 1929 that the best results were not being obtained, chiefly because the material was not well looked after. The advantages of appointing a competent officer to the larger destroyers for gunnery duties were pointed out, and there was a qualified Gunnery officer in the Commander of Destroyers ship. Lectures were also delivered to Gunnery specialists, and the system of analyzing firings was revised; also a full report on the gunnery material and arrangements in *Averoff* was prepared.

The work of the Greek destroyers and that of the Greek Naval Air Service also benefitted from the advice of the Lyon naval mission. A destroyer manual was written, which became the standard book and included all orders and instructions necessary for destroyer work in the Hellenic fleet. Consequently, the sections relating to destroyers in the Commander-in-Chief's Battle Instructions were revised. Furthermore, the Royal Air Force manual, and handbooks for each type of aircraft in the Greek Naval Air Service and those on order were translated into Greek.¹³⁶

By a decree published in February 1929, the status of the War Academy was revised, and called upon to carry out two separate functions, that of a Staff College for the training of Staff Officers and that of a War College whose attendance was

necessary for all executive officers before promotion to Commander. The same decree also ordered that all existing captains should follow the course on instruction at the Academy in order to complete and perfect their knowledge in the conduct of naval warfare, the course being obligatory before promotion to flag rank. Lectures were also given and schemes were investigated under the direct supervision of the Head of the British Mission.¹³⁷ It was finally proposed that all specialty schools should be concentrated in Poros, except the Gunnery, the Torpedo and the Signal schools. The first two schools would be based in the Bay of Kyra close to Scaramanga and the latter in Votanikos, Athens.¹³⁸

The issue of naval re-organization was hardly ignored by the Venizelos Administration. Legislative measures were taken that provided a sound basis for the system of assessment and promotion in the Navy. That system, alongside with the provision of an attractive scheme of voluntary exit and the consolidation of similar specialties and services within the Navy, resulted in the resignation or early retirement of a good number of officers and petty officers. Thus normalcy was restored, efficiency was increased and considerable economies were effected.¹³⁹ Indeed, the salaries of the overmanned Greek Navy consumed an astonishing 60% of the budget of the Ministry of Marine before these measures were taken.¹⁴⁰ A new scheme of recruiting conscripts was also tried. The term of recruitment was shortened to sixteen months,¹⁴¹ recruits still joined in March and October but those joining in March did not serve in seagoing ships; they completed their time after leaving the schools in shore establishments. Recruits joining in October completed their time in seagoing ships only. That meant that the conscripts and crews changed only once a year instead of twice a year, which formerly had been the case. Thus a higher state of efficiency of ships and crews was attained and greater economy was effected.¹⁴² The drive for increased efficiency of the lower deck rates was reinforced by the legislative widening of the pool from which the naval recruits were drawn and by the encouragement of long-term enlistment of volunteers who had a sea-faring background.¹⁴³ A new law was also brought into force which ordered that all commanders who had not been executive officers as commander or lieutenant commander had to serve one year as second in command of sea-going ships before they were promoted.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, the pay was raised in the submarine service, thus attracting many volunteers.¹⁴⁵

One of the most important largely organizational failings of the Greek naval system was the poor efficiency and maintenance of its mechanical departments, which were a quarter of a century astern of modern countries, both in ability of personnel and types of machinery.¹⁴⁶ Commander Wardlaw, who was appointed technical adviser to the General Director of the Arsenal for the organization of the workshops and inspection of ship's repairs, improved the technical administration of the Arsenal by revising the technical regulations and by introducing British naval engineering methods and standards. Moreover, Commissioned Electrician W.A. Nimmy did ample electrical work at the Arsenal while the Submarine Officer of the mission, Commander de S. Brock, undertook a lot of gyro compass and torpedo work.¹⁴⁷

The formulation of the Greek naval program reflected the general policy of the Venizelos Administration and naval developments in neighbouring Turkey. The former neither entertained irredentist aspirations against neighboring countries, nor

cultivated suspiciously close relations with any of the Great Powers.¹⁴⁸ It respected the status quo and trusted in the power of the League of Nations to forestall renewed hostilities between Greece and Turkey.¹⁴⁹ Venizelos was also “more interested in the budget than in the navy and he does not seriously believe in possibility of war. He feels therefore that it is more important that such ships as public opinion demands should be the cheapest rather than the best”.¹⁵⁰ A good example of this attitude was given on the occasion of the Greek procurement of inferior French batteries. Venizelos, when approached by Sir Percy Loraine, “stated with frankness.... that he was well aware that the British batteries were better than any other batteries and that in the case of the outbreak of war they would at once throw overboard the French batteries and install British batteries, but that in time of peace they were obliged to content themselves with a less good article at a lower price”.¹⁵¹

Notwithstanding the pacifist and economic drive of the Venizelos Administration Turkish naval developments caused consternation in Greece. Turkey got two Dutch built submarines in 1928 and the *Yavuz* was successfully re-commissioned in 1930, after years of speculation regarding her state. The cruiser's performance in speed trials surpassed the most optimistic expectations. The *Yavouz* also passed gunnery and fire control trials with flying colours in August 1930. It was expected that she would be fully operational in 1932, when the delivery of all the destroyers needed to protect her would be completed.¹⁵² Interestingly, a concerned Soviet Union, who was the most trusted partner of Turkey at the time, reinforced her Black Sea Fleet with a battleship and a cruiser from her Baltic Sea fleet in January 1930.¹⁵³

Venizelos was well aware that if war erupted between the two countries the initial danger for Greece was similar to the French case with the passage of the Algerian army corps to France; it consisted in the transport of the Greek troops from Crete and the rest of Greece to Salonika.¹⁵⁴ A further danger to be dealt with was the occupation of a major Greek island, i.e. Chios and Lesbos by the Turkish Navy. Both dangers did not impress Venizelos. He felt confident that even if Greece was denied the use of sea for her mobilization, the latter would still be completed earlier than the Turkish one, provided that the Greek navy also harassed the Aegean lines of communications of Turkey. He also argued that the temporary occupation of a major Greek island by the Turkish fleet would not decide the war. Moreover, such an occupation was not likely if the Turkish Navy denied the sea-transportation of the armed Greek islanders to the main theatre of operations in Thrace.¹⁵⁵

Having reviewed the worst case scenario of a Greek mobilization at the outbreak of a future Greek-Turkish war the question arose of the optimal force structure and objectives of the Greek Navy. Ever since his 1928 return to Government, the Greek statesman had been a recipient of a wide range of counsels and initiatives that shaped his vision of the Greek Navy. A complicating factor for the formulation of the Greek naval program was that of the *Salamis*. In 1928 *Vulkan* attempted to reach a compromise with the Greek State by proposing that Greece should procure the modernised *Salamis* and a dry dock of 20,000 tons. Alternatively, *Vulkan* proposed, Greece could buy any other item she wanted from the German shipbuilder and Germany at large up to the cost of the battle-cruiser. Both options would be financed by the full amount of the German War Reparations to Greece for the years 1928, 1929, 1930 and, to some extent, 1931. Argyropoulos, the Greek Minister of Marine,

argued in favour of procuring the modernised *Salamis* based on a corresponding study by the Greek Naval Staff.¹⁵⁶ This study maintained that the speed superiority of the *Yavouz* vis-a-vis the *Salamis* would be marginal and that the superior naval ordnance and armour protection of the Greek battle-cruiser would decide the issue in a contest between the two ships at a distance of less than eighteen kilometers. Argyropoulos wrote in favour of reaching a compromise on the lines proposed by *Vulkan*, since he was convinced of the fighting value of the *Salamis* and the alliance and commercial value of possessing a large dry dock in Piraeus. Moreover, a compromise with *Vulkan* would, in his view, facilitate the establishment of a “naval holiday” between Greece and Turkey without having to sacrifice the *Averoff*.¹⁵⁷

The procurement of *Salamis* was also supported by a study which was prepared by the renowned British naval architect and engineer Sir Eustace d'Eyncourt. It was maintained that the Greek battle-cruiser would enjoy substantial superiority in gunnery range, armour-protection and anti-aircraft protection over the *Yavouz*, if she was successfully modernised. It was also argued that the *Salamis* would be slightly speedier than the *Yavouz* after both of them took their final form.¹⁵⁸ A further support for the procurement of *Salamis* came from the Greek War College, where all relevant war games emphasised the need for procuring a heavy unit for the Greek Navy.¹⁵⁹ This, of course, begs the question whether the results of those games were influenced by the member of the British Naval mission who supervised the college. Considering the “Jutland obsession” of the majority of the interwar Royal Navy officers one cannot exclude this possibility.¹⁶⁰

In mid-1929, Kolialexis, a highly political but able naval officer,¹⁶¹ sent Venizelos a detailed memorandum in which he argued that the *Salamis* would be no adequate reply to a reconditioned *Yavouz*. According to him, the latter would be much speedier than the *Salamis* whose completion required an uncertain, probably large, amount of time and money. Moreover, *Yavouz* could lodge surprise attacks against Greek islands, convoys and the Greek capital itself, whose repulse would endanger *Salamis*, owing to the risks that she would run against carefully laid Turkish minefields, the Turkish superiority in light naval units and aircraft and the facile, good knowledge of her movements by the Turks. Based on First World War experience Kolialexis also argued that the alliance value of a Greek flotilla navy would be greater than that of a Greek navy whose main striking force was battleships. He therefore advocated building a fleet which would possess more torpedo-craft and fighter airplanes than its Turkish opponent and called for the possession of at least 10 submarines (one pair for each of the Dardanelles, Saronic and Thermaikos patrols and the rest for the protection of military convoys, the island of Lemnos, etc.)

The fate of *Kilkis* and *Lemnos* also exercised Venizelos and his staff. A study by the Greek Naval Staff concluded that the two pre-dreadnoughts enjoyed some chances of defeating the *Yavouz*, provided that the latter had already been torpedoed, bombed, or the exchange of fire between the Greek and the Turkish battle-fleets took place at a distance less than twelve kilometres. However, this was unlikely to happen considering the speed superiority of the *Yavouz* and its greater range of naval ordnance.¹⁶² A year later, another committee of the Greek Ministry of Marine favoured the upkeep and maintenance of the two pre-dreadnoughts, since their fire power was thought useful in wartime and they could house naval schools and a good

number of sailors and officers in peacetime, thus making good the shortage of space of the shore establishments.¹⁶³

Without fully subscribing to Kolialexis view, Venizelos preference for a flotilla navy and a strong naval arm owes much to it. The Greek Prime Minister admitted that it was likely that a modernised *Salamis* could prove slightly stronger than a refitted *Yavouz*. However, this was irrelevant considering the state of the naval air arm internationally, and its growing acceptance by such eminent naval thinkers as Admiral Castex. The *Salamis* could not hope to guard against a Turkish landing on a major Greek island, protect a military convoy, or fight it off against the *Yavouz*, if the Turks possessed superior naval air force.¹⁶⁴ The opposite would be the case if Greece enjoyed superiority over Turkey in light units and naval aircraft. Considering the financial equality of Greece and Turkey, Greece could not procure a relatively strong light fleet and naval air arm, if she spent a vast amount of money on completing the *Salamis*, while Turkey did not procure any new capital ship.¹⁶⁵ For reason of economy, neither the call for procuring two battleships¹⁶⁶ nor that of possessing a Navy which would include the *Salamis*, fifteen destroyers, and forty submarines, were accepted.¹⁶⁷ Finally it was decided that the two American pre-dreadnoughts could be utilised for the defence of the Saronic and the Thermaikos Gulfs, provided they were stationed behind the island of Fleves and the promontory of Karabournou respectively, and their fire be directed by naval aircraft.¹⁶⁸ Apparently, the British naval mission agreed with this in the short run.¹⁶⁹

Having settled the main lines of the Greek naval program the Venizelos Administration took steps towards reinforcing the Greek naval air arm. A new large hangar at Tatoi aerodrome, with a floor space of 60 by 40 meters was completed and a ground gunnery range was also constructed. The Tatoi aerodrome also doubled in size, and the technical buildings (workshops, bombing teacher hut, camera obscura hut, offices and stores) of the Phalerum Air Base further increased. Two "ATLAS" army co-operation aeroplanes were delivered from England and another ten of the same model were constructed at the Phalerum factory. Six "Horsley" day bombers also arrived from England and were installed in the new hangar at Tatoi. A Vickers Bygraves Bombing Teacher and a Camera Obscura for bombing instruction was also installed at Phalerum. Finally, the appointment of twenty eight new pilots and eight observer officers nearly doubled the number of flying personnel.¹⁷⁰

Developing the naval infrastructure of the country was also high in the agenda of Venizelos. Significantly, it was decided not to move to Scaramanga the Salamis Arsenal but equip it with completely modern machinery of all types and a new generator of German manufacture. A new refrigerating plant also of German manufacture, with ice boxes and cold room, was also completed, and big developments in harbour, basin and jetty arrangements were undertaken. These developments improved berthing for ships, and facilitated fuelling and refitting. Submarine jetties were also constructed for berthing the new submarines, and the equipment of the submarine depot was completed.¹⁷¹

Replenishing the naval stores was hardly ignored by the Greek government. Ammunition and anti-aircraft guns for naval units and naval shore establishments were procured, the cable and wireless communication system of the Navy was

updated and the stocks of oil fuel, and other necessary material were replenished. However, the procurement of torpedoes was somewhat eventful. An order for fifty torpedoes was originally placed with Messrs Whitehead.¹⁷² The latter sold complicated engines to the Greeks and neglected expert instructions in their use, with the result that most of the torpedoes supplied were quickly rendered unserviceable. The firm eventually set out an expert who declared that they were nearly all useless but that he was not competent to put them in running order. The Greek Government asked Messrs Whitehead to take them all back and test them, but the request was refused on the ground that their Weymouth range was booked up. The whole trouble gave rise to loud complaints in Parliament.¹⁷³ When a new tender for the procurement of torpedoes was invited, a French firm came close to securing it. However, the British Minister in Athens and the Head of the British naval mission to Greece intervened against this and it was eventually decided to place a trial order for six torpedoes each with Whitehead's and its French competitor.¹⁷⁴

The reinforcement of the Greek light fleet with new units was also taken up by the Venizelos Administration. After three years of indecision, tenders were invited for the procurement of two destroyers in summer 1929. At a time when the warship tonnage under construction in Britain was a seventh of the 1913 level,¹⁷⁵ the British feared lest the Greek tenders were given to Italian shipbuilders. The latter could offer excellent terms of payment because they were fully supported by the government and the banking system of Italy.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, "Italian firms had always been mere adjuncts of the government."¹⁷⁷ In an attempt to help the British shipbuilder to win the Greek naval order the Admiralty allowed them to make use of Admiralty hull and machinery designs in preparing their tenders.¹⁷⁸

The question of the Greek naval tender for destroyers was raised during Venizelos' visit to the Foreign Office in early August 1929. The Greek statesman professed his intention to give the order to a British shipbuilder provided that his offer was competitive.¹⁷⁹ A few days later Sir E. Phipps, the British delegate at the Hague Conference on Reparations raised again the issue with Venizelos who re-iterated his position that a competitive British offer would not be turned down. The Greek Prime Minister also added that if Greece was not given what she asked for at the conference, she could not proceed with any naval procurement, in an attempt to secure British support for her claim to higher annuities from the German Reparations.¹⁸⁰ In the sidelines of the Hague Conference British pressure upon Venizelos stepped up in an awkward manner. It was characteristically reported that "Everybody here is rather on edge and I find that the D.O.T. not knowing that I had already been directed to do so, instructed one of the Treasury people to speak to Venizelos about the destroyers. This he did after my interview with Venizelos, and was somewhat coldly received."¹⁸¹ Eventually, the British delegation supported the Greek claim at the Hague Conference on Reparations in August 1929, thus facilitating one of the greatest ever diplomatic victories of Venizelos;¹⁸² he secured for Greece the trebling of her income from war reparations while most other victorious countries saw drastic reductions in their income from that source.¹⁸³

Notwithstanding the many British efforts to win the Greek naval order, two Greek destroyers were eventually ordered from the Italian shipbuilding firm *Odero* in

October 1929¹⁸⁴ and another two from the same company in 1930.¹⁸⁵ This provoked the ire of the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty;¹⁸⁶ he probably foresaw the fact that the Greek order to Italy, at a time when there was British Naval Mission in Athens, would be used as evidence of the superiority of the Italian boats as compared with the British.¹⁸⁷ The Greeks were, according to Wardlow, “honestly anxious to obtain the best value for their money and they are not slow in these matters, and, whatever may be said, there is no doubt that the tenders are most minutely examined.”¹⁸⁸ It was therefore understandable that their order was placed with the *Odero* given that the Italian shipbuilder offered the lowest price and excellent performance and speed on paper, at least. It also without any reservation accepted the conditions and penalties laid down in the specification of the Greek Ministry of Marine, “which almost all other firms proposed to modify or render less onerous.”¹⁸⁹ This was also acknowledged by British officials who spoke of “the extraordinarily good terms which the Greeks extracted”¹⁹⁰ out of *Odero*. They also attributed the British failure to secure the Greek naval order to the marketing inferiority of the local agents of the British shipbuilders.¹⁹¹ Lower labor, material and overhead shipbuilding costs in Italy was a further explanation for the latest misfortune of the British shipbuilders.¹⁹² In fact, there were nineteen warships and four coast boats building for foreign powers in Italy in August 1930, at which time there was just one such order in progress in the UK – a destroyer for Yugoslavia.¹⁹³

It did not take long though before the four destroyers of the *Dardo* class that Greece procured from *Odero* proved as deficient as the Italian built destroyers that the Turkish Navy bought at the time.¹⁹⁴ It then became obvious that their procurement was also politically motivated and reflected the contemporary rapprochement between Greece and Italy. This was a process which was initiated by Prime Minister Kafandaris and his Minister of Foreign Affairs Michalakopoulos, who governed Greece between 1926 and 1928.¹⁹⁵ It was subsequently carried to its logical conclusion, namely the signing of a Graeco-Italian Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration in September 1928, at the beginning of Venizelos’ Premiership. The aforementioned treaty, alongside with the one that had been concluded between Italy and Turkey earlier the same year, could have led to a tripartite Italian-Greek-Turkish bloc that would strengthen the Italian position in the Eastern Mediterranean.

“But both Greece and Turkey were wary of the Italian dictator. In fact, Greece used her new tie with Italy to press Yugoslavia into settling the long-standing dispute over the free zone in Saloniki. In March 1929, Greece and Yugoslavia reached an agreement concerning the administration and operation of the free zone. This settlement was not a source of pleasure for Mussolini, who was interested in isolating Yugoslavia from her neighbors.”¹⁹⁶ He was also disappointed by the outcome of the Greco-Turkish Treaty of Friendship, Neutrality, and Arbitration and the Greek-Turkish Naval Protocol which were signed in October 1930.¹⁹⁷ The treaty settled several issues that had arisen between the two countries since 1923. On the other hand, the Naval Protocol, by cleverly insisting on monitoring rather than banning outright naval armaments, put an end to the naval armaments race between Greece and Turkey.¹⁹⁸ It also found its corollary in the 1931 Soviet-Turkish Naval Protocol, marking the beginning of the naval holiday in the Aegean and the Black Sea that was to last until 1934.¹⁹⁹

The Greco-Turkish tie, once achieved, proved to be one of the strongest bulwarks of the status quo in the Balkans. Neither the Greek nor the Turkish Government was willing to allow itself to become the pawn of Mussolini's expansionist strategy.²⁰⁰ Greece was given time to strengthen her army,²⁰¹ bring the *Salamis* question into an agreeable conclusion,²⁰² and implement a "flotilla navy" policy against the advice of the Greek Naval Staff that advocated the procurement of at least one pocket battleship.²⁰³ In summer 1931 the Greek naval programme was voted in, and its implementation was to take place between 1931 and 1940. It provided for the building of two flotillas of eight destroyers each, two flotilla leaders, a submarine layer, an oil tanker, a floating dock, the extension of the infrastructure of the Arsenal at Salamis, the procurement of mines and mine barrages, etc. It was also intended to develop a relatively strong air arm which would be supervised by the newly established Greek Ministry of Air.²⁰⁴ No provision was made for the procurement of submarines since the accession of six French-built submarines to the Greek fleet was about to be completed.²⁰⁵

Alas, debt-ridden Greece could not withstand the double shock of the Great Crash (1929) and the abandonment of the Gold Standard by Britain (1931). The Greek economy defaulted in the spring of 1932, despite persistent attempts to the contrary by the Venizelos Administration.²⁰⁶ Between then and the outbreak of the Second World War Greece's access to international capital markets was interrupted.²⁰⁷ The small number of Greek naval procurements in the early 1930s constituted all that was permitted by the default of Greece, the contemporary international monetary instability, the current movement for general disarmament,²⁰⁸ and the failure to effect considerable economies inside the Greek Navy.²⁰⁹ Such was the economic crisis that Greece experienced at the time that she dispensed with the services of all foreign missions in the country, despite the Admiralty's modest reaction against this.²¹⁰

Greek naval policy and strategy in the decade that followed the Treaty of Lausanne proved flexible enough to move comfortably from its original capital ship proclivities to the mature acknowledgment of the merits of the "flotilla navy" thesis. This acknowledgement was, admittedly, reinforced by financial considerations and the counsels of successive British Naval Missions to Greece. The naval affairs of Greece were of some interest to the Great Mediterranean Naval Powers as attested by the concurrent competition of Britain, France and Italy for securing a substantial political or economic influence over them. The satisfactory record of the reorganizational and educational activities of the British naval missions to Greece confirmed the value of foreign naval assistance.

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³ L. R. Pratt, *East of Malta West Of Suez: Britain's Mediterranean Crisis 1936-1939*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 9. A. Clapton, "Growing Respect: The

Royal Navy and the Marine Nationale, 1918-39” edited by M. S. Alexander and W. J. Philpott, *Anglo-French Defence Relations between the Wars*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 30-31

⁴ J. Blatt, “The Parity that Meant Superiority: French Naval Policy towards Italy at the Washington Conference, 1921-1922, and Interwar French Foreign Policy”, *French Historical Studies*, vol. 12 n. 2, pp. 223-248

⁵ L. Sondhaus, *Navies of Europe 1815-2002*, London, Pearson Education Limited, 2002, p. 209

⁶ W.I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy. The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy*, Kent, Ohio, The Kent State University Press, c1988, pp. 58-59. A. Cassels, *Musolini's Early Diplomacy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970, pp. ix-xi. R. M. Salerno, “The French Navy and the Appeasement of Italy, 1937-9”, *The English Historical Review*, 112:445 (1997) p. 45

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⁹ Z., Fotakis, “The Kelly Naval Mission to Greece, May 1919–October 1921”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 3, 2 (2006), pp. 185–188, 191-194. Information on the work of the Smith Naval Mission to Greece (November 1921-June 1923) can be found in T.N.A., ADM. 1/8648/228, Smith to Bentinck, Athens, 30 December 1922 & Bentinck to Curzon, Athens, 27 April 1923

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¹¹ E.L.I.A. (Elliniko Logotechniko kai Istoriko Archeio) Oikonomou-Gouras MSS, Gerontas to Voulgaris, 24 July 1924

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¹³ I.P.E.X., (Ipourgeio Exoterikon) 1923, File 8/5, Voulgaris to Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 20 July 1923.

¹⁴ Hekdotike Athenon, *Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous. Neoterou Hellenismos, apo 1913 os 1941*, Athens, 1978, pp. 300-301

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¹⁶ A.C.M., BB7/143, Bulletin d'Informations Militaires n. 7, Chapitre II, Athens, 3 Avril 1922

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³⁶ T.N.A., ADM. 116/2264, M. 01696/24, Greek Naval Mission, London, 4 October 1924. In peacetime, the Greek seas were hardly of lesser importance. The large scale exercise in the

southern Aegean, which was carried out by the British Mediterranean Fleet under Admiral Sir Roger Keyes during the summer cruise of 1925, in order to find out the risks to which the British Main Fleet would be exposed when passing through the southern part of the Malacca Strait on its way to relieve Singapore from possible Japanese invaders, is a case in point. Roskill, *Naval Policy between the Wars*, pp. 537-538

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⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-17

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24

⁶¹ T.N.A., ADM., 116/2264, Enclosure X to British Naval Mission Letter no. 1A of 14th February 1925, pp. 7-8

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁶³ T.N.A., ADM. 116/2264, Enclosure I to British Naval Mission Letter no. 1A of 14th February 1925, pp. 24-27

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30

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⁶⁶ T.N.A., ADM. 116/2264, Enclosure II to British Naval Mission Letter n. 1A of 14th February 1925, pp. 1-8

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⁶⁸ T.N.A., ADM 116/2264, Enclosure to Letter n. 30 c from Webb dated 24th December 1924 – Memorandum on the Greek Naval Air Service

⁶⁹ T.N.A., ADM 116/2264, Enclosure to Letter n. 13 D from British Naval Mission dated 29th December 1924, Memorandum on Dockyards

⁷⁰ T.N.A., ADM 116/2264, Webb to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Athens, 24 December 1924

⁷¹ T.N.A., ADM 116/2264, Enclosure to Letter n. 13 D from British Naval Mission dated 29th December 1924, Memorandum on Dockyards, p. 6 & Enclosure III to British Naval Mission Letter no. 1A of 14th February 1925, pp. 1-3. The Costing System was an elaborate way of accounting specifically designed to serve the financial operation of the Salamis Arsenal.

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- ¹¹⁰ T.N.A., ADM. 116/2298, Cheetham, Athens, 3 March 1926
- ¹¹¹ T.N.A., F.O. 286/972, Townsend to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Athens, 17 March 1926
- ¹¹² T.N.A., F.O. 286/972, Smith, 8 March 1926
- ¹¹³ T.N.A., F.O. 286/951, Report by Lord Jellicoe, Isle of Wight, 14 January 1926
- ¹¹⁴ Mezeviris, *Tessares Dekaeitrides eis tin Hipiresian tou Vasilikou Naftikou*, p. 95
- ¹¹⁵ T.N.A., F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929. Although this source dates from the end of our period it demonstrates weaknesses that were valid throughout the 1920s .
- ¹¹⁶ T.N.A., F.O. 286/951, Caclamano to Chamberlain, London, 9 June 1926. Mezeviris, *Tessares Dekaeitrides eis tin Hipiresian tou Vasilikou Naftikou*, p. 108.
- ¹¹⁷ T.N.A., F.O. 286/951, Townsend to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Athens, 18 February 1926
- ¹¹⁸ T.N.A., ADM. 1/8756/157, p. 4
- ¹¹⁹ T.N.A., ADM. 116/2504, Foreign Office to Cheetham, 23 October 1926

¹²⁰ T.N.A., ADM. 1/8756/157, p. 4

¹²¹ On the occasion of its departure from Greece, Lorraine, the British Minister in Athens, characteristically wrote that "the late mission won golden opinions in all quarters". T.N.A., F.O. 371/13648, C4876, Lorraine to Foreign Office, Athens, 14 June 1929

¹²² E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 58, 24 March 1930, Address of Vasiliadis, p. 368

¹²³ T.N.A., F.O. 286/988, Turle to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Athens, 9 October 1927.

¹²⁴ Kavadias, *O Naftikos Polemos tou 40*, pp. 42-43. Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 88, Panas to Minister of Marine, Athens, 12 February 1929

¹²⁵ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Rediadis, p. 645

¹²⁶ T.N.A., F.O. 286/999, Loraine to Chamberlain, Athens, 30 November 1927.

¹²⁷ D. Phocas, *Ekthesis epi tis Draseos tou B. Nautikou kata ton Polemon 1940-1944*, Athens, Ekdoseis, Istorikis Iporiesias Basilikou Naftikou, 1953, vol. 1, pp. 12-13. Loundras MSS, Loundras to the Chief of the Greek Naval Staff, Athens, 11 August 1927

¹²⁸ Loundras MSS, Loundras to the Chief of the Greek Naval Staff, Athens, 11 August 1927. T.N.A., F.O. 286/988, Turle to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Athens, 9 October 1927

¹²⁹ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Botsaris, p. 642

¹³⁰ St. Roskill, *Naval Policy between the Wars. The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939*, London, Collins, 1976, pp. 189-190

¹³¹ T. N. A., F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission, Lyon to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929, p. 1

¹³² Captain Lyon had a staff of seven officers at his disposal, including two Royal Air Force officers. T.N.A., ADM 1/8756/157, p.4. The contract of his mission followed closely the lines of the Turle one. T.N.A., F.O. 371/13648, C1719 Loraine to Foreign Office, Athens, 8 March 1929

¹³³ T. N. A., F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission, Lyon to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929, pp. 1-2

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 3

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 6

¹³⁶ Ibid, pp. 13-14

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 4

¹³⁸ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Botsaris, p. 641

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 642

¹⁴⁰ Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 88, Panas to Minister of Marine, Athens, 12 February 1929

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² T. N. A., F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission, Lyon to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929, p. 5

¹⁴³ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Botsaris, p. 642. E.S.B. Second Extraordinary Period, Session 6, 11 July 1929, Address of Botsaris, p. 142

¹⁴⁴ T. N. A., F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission, Lyon to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929, p. 8

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 12

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 13

¹⁴⁸ Svolopoulos, *He Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki 1900-1945*, p. 212

¹⁴⁹ Petropoulos, *Anamniseis enos Paliou Nautikou*, pp. 22-28. T.N.A., F.O. 371/13648, C4880, Lorrain to Foreign Office, Athens 24 June 1929 & C3354, Harvey to Henderson, Athens, 13 November 1929 & C8693, Harvey to Foreign Office, Athens, 14 November 1929

¹⁵⁰ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C8693, Harvey to Foreign Office, Athens, 14 November 1929. Harvey also spoke highly of the “really great efforts which M. Venizelos has made himself to improve the financial position of his country” T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, Harvey to Henderson, Athens, 13 November 1929

¹⁵¹ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, , C 5295, Foreign Office to Arthur Henderson, 5 July 1929

¹⁵² Guvenc, & Barlas, “Ataturk’s Navy”, p. 19

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 16-17

¹⁵⁴ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7391, Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station to Secretary of the Admiralty, Malta, 22 August 1929. Eleftherai, a port near Cavalla, was abandoned as the point of concentration of the Greek mobilization on account of its vulnerability to Turkish naval harassment, owing to its proximity to the Dardanelles. E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 34, 10 February 1930, Address of Venizelos, p. 554

¹⁵⁵ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 34, 10 February 1930, Address of Venizelos, p. 555-559

¹⁵⁶ Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 87, Argyropoulos to Venizelos, Athens, 18 October 1928

¹⁵⁷ Benakion, Venizelos MSS, Sigrisis machitikis isxios: A) Thorikton Kilkis kai Lemnos kai evdromou machis Javouz; b) Thoriktou Salamis kai Evdromou Machis Javouz, Athens, 17 October 1928

¹⁵⁸ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 41, 14 February 1930, Address of Stratos, p. 722

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 729

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- ¹⁶⁰ Roskill, *Naval Policy between the Wars. The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929*, p. 533
- ¹⁶¹ Kavadias, *O Naftikos Polemos tou 40*, p. 574
- ¹⁶² Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 87, Sigrisis machitikis isxios: A) Thorikton Kilkis kai Lemnos kai evdromou machis Javouz; b Thoriktou Salamis kai Evdromou Machis Javouz, Athens, 17 October 1928
- ¹⁶³ Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 90, Praktikon, Athens, 20 December 1929. E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Botsaris, p. 641
- ¹⁶⁴ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 34, 10 February 1930, Address of Venizelos, pp. 555-559
- ¹⁶⁵ Benakion, Venizelos MSS, File 89, Kolialexis to Venizelos, Athens, 7 June 1929. T.N.A., F.O. 286/999, Loraine to Chamberlain, Athens, 30 November 1927.
- ¹⁶⁶ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Rediadis, p. 642
- ¹⁶⁷ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 34, 10 February 1930, Address of Venizelos, p. 559. This naval program was advocated by the Greek Naval Staff who it was forced to withdraw it, owing to the implicit threat of Venizelos that he would re-install Kolialexis in the Active List and appoint him as Chief of the Naval Staff. Petropoulos, *Anamniseis kai Skepseis enos Paliou Naftikou*, pp. 26-27
- ¹⁶⁸ E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 34, 10 February 1930, Address of Venizelos, p. 557-558
- ¹⁶⁹ Efimeris ton Sizitiseon tis Gerousias, Third Synod, Session 111, 6 July 1931, address of Venizelos, p. 1446
- ¹⁷⁰ T.N.A, F.O. 286/1050, Half-Yearly Report from British Naval Mission to the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, Athens, 5 December 1929, pp. 6-7
- ¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10
- ¹⁷² E.S.B., Second Period, Second Synod, Session 37, 14 February 1930, Address of Botsaris, pp. 640-641
- ¹⁷³ T.N.A, F.O. 371/14379, C1133, Ramsay to Henderson, Athens, 3 January 1930
- ¹⁷⁴ T.N.A, F.O. 371/14379, C4703, Ramsay to Foreign Office, Athens, 14 June 1930.
- ¹⁷⁵ G.A.H. Gordon, *British Seapower and procurement between the Wars: a reappraisal of rearmament*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1988, p. 77
- ¹⁷⁶ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C4969, Loraine to Foreign Office, Athens, 5 July 1929
- ¹⁷⁷ Th. Ropp, "The Modern Italian Navy. II Since 1900", *Military Affairs*, vol. 5, n. 2, p. 108
- ¹⁷⁸ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C5030, Naval Staff, Intelligence Division Admiralty, 5 July 1929
- ¹⁷⁹ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C5877/14/19, Sargent to Harvey, 7 August 1929

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- ¹⁸⁰ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, , C6210/14/19, Sargent to the Managing Director of Vickers-Armstrong, August 1929
- ¹⁸¹ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C6471/5000/19, Phipps to Sargent, The Hague, 16 August 1929
- ¹⁸² T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7857, Dawson to Sargent, London 10 October 1929
- ¹⁸³ Dafnis, *I Hellas metaxi dio Polemon*, vol. 2, pp. 71-75
- ¹⁸⁴ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7549, Harvey to Foreign Office, Athens, 3 October 1929
- ¹⁸⁵ T. N. A., F.O. 371/14379, C5862, Ramsay to Henderson, Athens, 16 July 1930
- ¹⁸⁶ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7701, Department of Overseas Trade to Foreign Office, 4 October 1929
- ¹⁸⁷ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, Yarrow Co Ltd to Foreign Office, Glasgow, 18 December 1929
- ¹⁸⁸ T.N.A., F.O. 371/15230, Memorandum by Commander Mark Wardlow, Athens, 7 January 1931
- ¹⁸⁹ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7714, Note by the Greek Government, Athens, 9 October 1929
- ¹⁹⁰ T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C7857, Dawson to Sargent, 10 October 1929
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁹² T. N. A., F.O. 371/13648, C3354, Thornycroft to D.O.T, 19 November 1929 & T.N.A., F.O. 371/14379, C185, Naval Attache Rome to Sir Ronald Graham HM Ambassador Rome, January 1930
- ¹⁹³ Gordon, *British Seapower and procurement between the Wars*, p. 91
- ¹⁹⁴ T.N.A., F.O. 371/15230, C6296, Naval Staff Intelligence Division Admiralty, to Foreign Office London, 12 August 1931; Kavadias, *O Naftikos Polemos tou 40*, p. 183; Guvenc, & Barlas, "Ataturk's Navy", pp. 19-20
- ¹⁹⁵ Svolopoulos, *He Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki 1900-1945*, pp. 208-210
- ¹⁹⁶ L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, London, Hurst and Company, 2001, p.736
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁸ Xatzivassileiou, E., *O Eleftherios Venizelos, he hellenotourkike prosegise kai to provlima tis asfalias sta Valkania, 1928-1931*, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1999, pp. 86-98
- ¹⁹⁹ Guvenc, & Barlas, "Ataturk's Navy", pp. 16-17
- ²⁰⁰ Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, p. 736. Dafnis, *I Hellas metaxi dio Polemon*, pp. 61-62
- ²⁰¹ Svolopoulos, *He Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki 1900-1945*, p. 225
- ²⁰² Mezeviris, *Tessares Dekatirides eis tin Ipiresian tou Vasilikou Naftikou*, pp. 98-99

²⁰³ T.N.A., F.O. 371/14379, C9206 Ramsay to Sargent, Athens, 6 December 1930. Influential senator and former naval person Ginis subsequently advocated the procurement of three pocket battleships by Greece. Efimeris ton Sizitiseon tis Gerousias, Third Synod, Session 111, 6 July 1931, address of Ginis, p. 1442

²⁰⁴ G.A.K., Metaxas MSS, File 121, Sinoptikon Ipomnima epi tou Naftikou Programatos, 1935; T.N.A., F.O. 371/13648, C7391, C-in-C Mediterranean Station to Secretary of the Admiralty, Malta, 22 August 1929

²⁰⁵ Sourvinos, 'To Programma Exoplismou tou Polemikou Nautikou, 1824–1989', p. 214

²⁰⁶ Ekdotiki Athinon, *Historia tou Hellenikoy Ethnous: Neoteris Hellenismos apo to 1913 os to 1941*, Athens, 1978, pp. 328-331

²⁰⁷ N. Pantelakis, *Dimosia Dania*, Athens, Morfotiko Idrima Ethnikis Trapezis, 1995, pp. 77-78

²⁰⁸ C. Karamanlis, *O Eleftherios Venizelos kai oi Exoterikes mas Scheseis, 1928-1932*, Athens, Helliniki Euroekdotiki, 1986, p. 215

²⁰⁹ G.A.K., Metaxas MSS, File 121, Isigitiki Ekthesis Sxediou Nomou peri ekteleseos Naftikou Programatos, 1935

²¹⁰ T.N.A. F.O. 371/15969, C3751, Comment of Balfour 10 May 1932 & C3905 Ramsay to Foreign Office, Athens, 15 May 1932