

Ex-king arrives in Greece as British prepare to expand Balkan war

by Dean Andromidas and Mark Burdman

The arrival in Greece on Aug. 8 of ex-King Constantine for a so-called private visit represents the cutting edge of a British policy that could destabilize Greece and the southern Balkans, setting the stage for an expansion of the Balkan war. The timing of his long-planned return was apparently finalized during the funeral of Belgian King Baudouin, where Constantine met Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, who reportedly had been in close contact with him during his exile in London.

The current trip marks the first extended visit by the former king to Greece since 1967. The ex-king, as is the case with all former "Greek" monarchs, is a British tool. In all past cases, monarchical restoration in Greece has only been possible under conditions of extreme upheaval, if not civil war. Today it won't be much different: For Britain to have its pet monarchy restored, Greece must be plunged into a severe crisis.

The arrival of Constantine, who has outspoken views on "Greater Greece," immediately sparked an outcry from the left. "The visit is a major provocation against the Greek people. The monarchy issue in Greece is closed, and he should have never been granted permission to land," said Anastassios Peponis, spokesman for the opposition Socialist Party quoted in the *Times* of London. Maria Damanaki, president of the Leftist Coalition, Greece's third-largest party, declared, "We will propose a draft bill in parliament calling for Constantine to be declared *persona non grata* in Greece."

The move should also be seen in the context of elections in Greece, anticipated for the early spring of 1994 at the latest, where the issue of giving de facto support to Serbia in the Balkan conflict is hot.

Who is ex-King Constantine

Constantine fled Greece in 1967 following an abortive attempt to overthrow the military junta. In 1974, after the restoration of a non-military government, the Greek people voted against restoration of the monarchy in a national referendum, although 30% supported Constantine's return. He returned to Greece only one other time, with special permission, to attend the funeral of his mother, Queen Frederieke.

Taking up residence in Britain, Constantine, a scion of the House of Gluecksburg, has always been a British asset.

The other celebrated member of the House of Gluecksburg is Prince Philip, Consort of Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh. Philip and Constantine had the same grandfather. At an early age, Constantine cut out a career in the City of London in the reinsurance business, receiving support from some of the super-rich Greek shipping magnates. Some of these, such as Ioannis Latsis, have been generous bankrollers of the British Conservative Party. Latsis has also freely funded the claimant to the Serbian throne, Crown Prince Alexander, and is a financial patron of Britain's Prince Charles.

Casting himself in the image of his ancestors, who oversaw the expansion of modern Greece in the 19th and early 20th century, sometimes with disastrous results, Constantine authored a signal piece which appeared in the *Sunday Express* of London last April. Here he laid out his "greater Greece" design. Coming just short of calling for territorial expansion, he spoke of Greece's responsibilities to Greek ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and southern Albania.

Regarding the collapse of communism in Russia and eastern Europe, he also spoke of the prominent role the Greek Orthodox Church could play throughout the region. It is a policy that, on the one hand, could support Serbian interests concerning Kosova, Albania, Macedonia, and on the other, could bring Greece into direct conflict with Bulgaria, Turkey, and even Russia. Indeed, Russia—always prone, as history has proven, to shift from "Pan-Orthodox" to a "Pan-Slavic Orthodox" policy—could very well end up seeing Greece, whether expansionist or not, as more of a geopolitical rival than an "Orthodox brother." In every period of wars in the Balkans in both the 19th and 20th centuries, Russia has always sided either with Slavic Bulgaria or Serbia, and never with Greece.

Under normal circumstances, Constantine—never a symbol for Greek political unity—could not represent a leading political force in Greece. Although it is claimed he has accepted his fate as an "ex-king," he stated in a BBC interview last February that "I have never given up my rights to the Greek throne . . . and the Greek people can at any time decide differently."

Greece, like Britain and France, opposes any military intervention against Serbia, having opposed from the outset any breakup of Yugoslavia. It has refused to recognize the "Republic of the Former Yugoslav State of Macedonia,"

claiming that even mentioning the name "Macedonia" implies revanchist claims on Greek Macedonian territory. A current dispute with Albania over the ethnic Greek minorities in southern Albania comes at a time when Serbia is poised to move against the ethnic Albanian minority in Kosova. Furthermore, there appears to be a consensus across the political spectrum around this policy.

With preparations being made for the elections next April, both the left and right opposition are taking even more extreme pro-Serbian positions. Constantine's surprise visit plays directly into the hands of another British asset in Greece, Andreas Papandreou, leader of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). Given the current economic crisis, which has been worsened by the implementation of a privatization policy inspired by the International Monetary Fund, Papandreou is expected to win. Papandreou charged that Constantine's visit was "a great provocation to every Greek," and that "the government should know that for the Greeks, Gluecksburg is *persona non grata*, and his passport should be withdrawn." As prime minister in the early 1980s, Papandreou pursued a highly provocative territorial policy, including restationing troops from the Bulgarian border to the Greek border with Turkey, its erstwhile NATO ally, precipitating one of the worst crises in NATO of that decade.

Also playing into Papandreou's hands is former Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras, whose breakaway faction from the ruling New Democratic Party will draw votes away from the government. Educated at Harvard University and said to have support from the American State Department, he also has extreme pro-Serbian and nationalist positions.

Mount Athos and the 'Pan-Orthodox' drive

Not only is the timing of his visit significant, but so is his choice to land in Thessaloniki, where, before embarking on a cruise of the Aegean Islands on the yacht of the Prince of Hanover, Constantine visited Mount Athos, home of the most important Orthodox monasteries and center of opposition to western Christianity. This attempt to cast himself as "leader of the faithful" comes in the context of a series of conferences and diplomatic moves attempting to use the Orthodox faith to mobilize support for a pro-Serbian policy.

In June, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic visited Athens at the invitation of the Association for Greek-Serbian Friendship. To a tumultuous welcome by several thousand Greeks, he spoke at a "Greek-Serbian friendship rally," supported by the large trade union confederations and blessed by the Greek Orthodox Church. "Long live Hellenism and Orthodoxy!" he declared to the rally participants.

Karadzic also held talks with Greek political and religious leaders, including Mitsotakis, Papandreou, and the Archbishop of Athens, Monsignor Seraphim, primate of the Greek Orthodox Church. After the last meeting, Karadzic declared, "Only God and the Greeks support" the Serbs. Attacking "the role of the Vatican and Germany" in the Bosnian conflict, he



Greece's Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, who recently held the door open for ex-king Constantine, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and Bosnian Serb chief Radovan Karadzic.

claimed, "We are an Orthodox people. . . . Our faith keeps us going." He proposed creating a permanent conference of the Orthodox countries on the model of the Organization of Islamic Countries.

At the end of June, Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Athens as the first Russian head of state to visit Greece since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. In an attempt to play the "pan-Orthodox card," the former professor of communist doctrine declared that Russia and Greece should cooperate more closely in the Balkans, especially since the two countries have "close spiritual and cultural links," being "united by the Christian Orthodox religion." Commenting to the press about the spirit of the discussions that took place in Athens between the two delegations, Yeltsin declared, "We have an identity of views on the question of stability in the Balkans: We give priority to diplomatic and political procedures." Yeltsin was accompanied by a 120-man delegation and signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation in the areas of political, economic, and security cooperation.

At a June 30 press conference, Yeltsin also endorsed the Greek position vis-à-vis Albania. Speaking to Greek journalists, he attacked "the vandalism of the action of the Albanian authorities," in recently expelling a leading Greek Orthodox prelate from Albania. Greece has massively overreacted to this expulsion, by expelling some 16,500 ethnic Albanians from Greece over one week. Yeltsin has now effectively endorsed this mass expulsion policy by the Athens regime.

Orthodoxy used as tool of geopolitics

From June 30-July 4, the Greek foreign minister sponsored a conference of Orthodox parliamentarians from east-

ern Europe and the Balkans. It was held near an important Orthodox convent in Ormilia. According to an official statement of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which, along with representatives of the Orthodox churches played a leading role at the conference, the meeting's purpose was to "consider challenges to the place of Orthodoxy in the new European situation, and to seek ways of responding to the challenges with a common voice." While the final conference document did not address war in the Balkans directly, a WCC representative from Romania told the press that the conference "had Serbia in view when it called on home countries of conference participants to 'oppose the existing disinformation when referring to the role of Orthodox peoples in regions of conflict.' "

The conference singled out Greece's special role as "the only Orthodox member-state in the European Community" (Greece will have the presidency of the European Community beginning January 1994), and asked Russia, as the "only Orthodox member of the United Nations Security Council," to "defend the common interests of the Orthodox peoples" in the Security Council.

Conference participants included 25 representatives of the Greek parliament, seven officials from Greek ministries, and parliamentarians and/or church representatives from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Slovakia, as well as representatives of various Orthodox institutions, the Conference of European Churches, and the WCC.

Political observers both inside and outside of Greece see no advantage for Greece to rush into a pan-Orthodox adventure which would generate considerable opposition within Greece itself. *Eleftherotypia*, which represents the left-liberal spectrum of Greek opinion, recently took the opportunity to attack such pan-Orthodoxy when it reported, under the headline "Documents of Shame," what it said were excerpts from a document written earlier this year by the Greek EYP secret service.

Although in fact the report had been cancelled in May, because it contained "entirely false elements," *Eleftherotypia* denounced the document for putting forward the idea that only Greeks who are members of the Orthodox faith, are "fully Greek." It further denounced the document for proposing that the Orthodox religion should become the basis of Greek foreign policy, so that Greece would seek to create an Orthodox axis in the region that could "go against the Turkish-Muslim arc in the region."

A European source observed that a pan-Orthodox policy would "blow up in the faces" of the Greek government, and that Constantine's return would only make matters worse. The source said that all of Europe could be thrown into crisis by this, and that the adoption of a "pan-Orthodox, effectively theocratic" outlook by significant parts of the Greek political class is proving an "embarrassment" for all of Europe.

Great Russia

Moscow tightens control over CIS economic union

by Konstantin George

The immediate goal of a consensus of the Russian elite for a Russian-dominated Community of Independent States (CIS) Economic Union is on target for September. The Aug. 7 Moscow summit of Russia, Kazakhstan, and the three Central Asian CIS members, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan agreed to convene a CIS summit to take "concrete steps" for forming an economic union on Sept. 7 in Moscow. On July 17, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus had already agreed to have ready in treaty form by Sept. 1, their own "Slavic" Economic Union. In certain domains, these treaties will rubber-stamp the Great Russian controls over the other republics established through Russian government measures taken in the wake of the July 24 ruble reform.

On Aug. 6 at a Russian cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin confirmed that he had just appointed Russian Central Bank head Viktor Gerashchenko to also be Russia's representative on the CIS Inter-State Bank. Gerashchenko was promoted over the protests of the cabinet's leading International Monetary Fund stooge, Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov. Being the Russian representative on the Inter-State Bank makes Gerashchenko de facto head of the bank. Russia has a 50% voting share in the bank, but given its "influence" over some of the republics, the bank is under solid Russian control.

Under the terms of the July-August Economic Union agreements, the powers of the CIS Inter-State Bank extend beyond a multilateral clearing role. The bank is to coordinate financial, monetary, and credit policies among CIS members. Two days before the Russian cabinet meeting, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko said that all republics in the CIS, and especially those remaining in the ruble zone, have been forced to "give up a piece" of their national sovereignty.

'Currency Union' formed

At the Aug. 7 summit, the Presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan (Yeltsin, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and Islam Karimov), jointly announced their agreement for a "Currency Union," where the currency for all three would be