

Cyprus: An Arms Aid Case Study

By Drew Pearson

There are two inside facts about the threatened war over Cyprus that put our military aid program in an ironic light.

Fact No. 1 is that the United States had just delivered the F-104 jets to Turkey that the Turkish air force turned around and used to strafe Cyprus.

Fact No. 2 is that when the United States screamed in protest against the use of the planes, the Turks blandly replied that their air mission over Cyprus was no different from our raid over North Viet-Nam. Since we had set the precedent, they felt entitled to follow it.

The F-104s that we had just delivered to Turkey are among the fastest fighters the U.S. Air Force has developed. They fly two or three times the speed of sound. The Turks were recently sent about 24 of them. The Greeks have only half that number. The bulk of the Greek air force is made up of F-84s, which are not supersonic and which are Model Ts as compared with the F-104s or the F-100s, the latter also supersonic.

The Turks have about 150 F-100s, while the Greeks have



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about the same number of F-84s, which gives the Turks great superiority in the air. With these fast fighters, especially the brand new F-104s, the Turks could shoot the Greeks out of the sky, which is probably one reason the Greeks have been more reasonable than the Turks in the last few days, though they were more difficult when Premiers Papadnreu and Inonu were here in June.

Grave Weakness

However, the real irony is that these two allies of the United States have been threatening to plunge southeastern Europe—and perhaps the world—into war with the very same weapons that we supplied them.

This points to the gravest weakness of our military aid program—namely, that, once our allies get our weapons, we cannot control what they are going to do with them.

Thus, Pakistan has received about \$4 billion worth of military aid, but is now a firm ally of Red China. This was emphasized by Sen. Ernest Gruening (D-Alaska) when he published a letter from the Pakistani Ambassador stating that the arms received from the United States would be used against our friend, India, not to aid the United States in North Viet-Nam. Pakistan is

a member of SEATO, the alliance for the defense of Southeast Asia, but will not use American arms in that theater because it would be against Red China.

'Truman Doctrine'

It was 17 years ago, in 1947 that President Truman announced what later was called the Truman Doctrine of aid to Greece and Turkey. Greece and Turkey were then prostrate, and American aid, at first chiefly economic, put both countries back on their feet. But, since 1950, all of our emphasis has been on a military buildup. I recall visiting Athens in 1950, when our Ambassador, the late Jack Puerifoy boasted: "I have 30 divisions in the Greek army, all ready to go."

In Turkey that year, American officials also concentrated on the military, not the economy, the agriculture, the culture, or the freedoms of the country.

Greece, with a long tradition of democracy, managed to re-establish a democratic form of government under a constitutional monarchy. But Turkey, long ruled by the Sultans, suppressed its newspapers, clamped down on its Parliament, trampled on its Kurdish minority, and at times shot or changed its political opposition.

The United States, though supplying life blood for the Turkish military, did nothing

about this suppression of political freedom, which the present administration of Premier Inonu eventually overthrew. We made no real protest when the Turkish government in 1955 inspired rioters in Istanbul to ransack Greek shops, desecrate Greek churches, and ride roughshod over Christian and Jewish sanctuaries and graveyards.

We were interested only in Turkish military strength. In 1950-1952, during the Korean War, this policy was justified. But after Stalin died and East-West tensions relaxed, we did not shift our policy in Greece and Turkey. Greece and Turkey continued to be just as bitter toward each other, and we did little to alleviate that bitterness.

And while Turkey needed tractors and medical supplies, textbooks, and schoolteachers, far more than it needed F-104s, we continued to pour in military weapons.

Turkey and Greece have suffered from six centuries of bitterness. It is not easy to patch up their quarrel. But in some areas, as the Island of Rhodes, Greeks and Turks have lived peacefully, side by side. And the tragic fact is that, while the United States saved these countries from ruin in 1947, we did not begin to save them from themselves.