

# The influence of international security environment on civil-military relations: The case of Pangalos's dictatorship

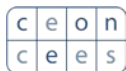


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## Abstract:

A significant increase in the number of coups in countries subject to prolonged external threats and influences once again raises questions about the place and role of armed forces in society. Most studies view the phenomenon of military involvement in politics as a result of the interplay of internal forces, often neglecting the impact of international conjuncture on shaping the relations between military and civilian institutions. Using the example of General Theodoros Pangalos's dictatorship in Greece (1925-1926), this paper examines the influence of the international security environment on civil-military relations. The case study aims to: qualitatively analyse and triangulate multiple types of data, and by process tracing the interaction of the variables in question, explore, describe and explain the causal links between them; and test the hypothesis that, in societies exposed to prolonged international tensions, the position of the military strengthens at the expense of civilian institutions. The research results demonstrate that an unfavourable international security environment negatively affects the development of civil-military relations and indicate the conclusion that a garrison state, where the military exerts greater influence on political processes thereby undermining civilian governance, remains a possible outcome of the political development of societies facing prolonged external threats.

**Keywords:** security; civil-military relations; international relations; international security environment; garrison state; dictatorship; Greece; Theodoros Pangalos; Harold Lasswell

## INTRODUCTION

Civil-military relations have returned to the centre of attention following the series of coups in Africa (Reuters, 2023; Tanjug, 2023). Expert community has noticed a “striking resemblance” among them: the ultimate goal of the military to maintain power in the long term, and unfavourable international security environment as a key reason for a doubled number of coups in last three years in comparison to the period from 2000 to 2017 (Vines, 2024). At the same time, in the presence of the Chief of Staff, Greek minister of defence stated that his country “had not become Luxembourg” in geopolitical sense, and that the armed forces belonged to neither governments nor political parties” but “to Greek people and nation”, because they protected territorial and national integrity that remains intact “from all kinds of threats that we have been experiencing most intensely over the previous years”, and added that every public degradation of the military was not only unjust, “that might even be tolerated”, but “deeply damaging to the nation” (Ministry of National Defence, 2023). The most renowned Greek daily paper immediately assessed that such unusual statement had a “manifold symbolic meaning” targeting “the widest spectrum of goals” (Nedos, 2023). Since the “most striking characteristic of the Greek military in 20<sup>th</sup> century is its interference in politics”, one of the meanings could easily be that the military, as the ultimate protector of state, was not ready to unconditionally obey the civil group that ruled the country at that moment in the event of hesitation in the face of the Turkish threat (Veremis, 2000: 297).

The obvious question, that we will try to answer using the striking Greek example, is if and how international security environment influences civil-military relations. For the most part, this issue was not raised systematically, nor, consequently, was a comprehensive answer offered to it because previous

studies of the Greek military's involvement in politics have mostly focused on the analysis of the interplay of internal social powers. Apart from monographs of Greek authors, scattered data were collected during the research on memoir-based material and personal archives of immediate participants in the events, as well as numerous scientific articles and debates. The most valuable source was Greek archive materials: authentic documents, parliamentary records, legal acts, and political decisions passed in the given period. Greek daily press as well as the reflection of the times and useful auxiliary tool for better understanding and interpretation of then circumstances.

Searching for the answer to the raised question, we will analyse the case study of General Theodoros Pangalos's dictatorship (1925–1926) and test the effectiveness of the hypothesis that prolonged international tensions strengthen the position of the military at the expense of civilian institutions. To that end, Harold Lasswell's developmental construct of the garrison state was presented as theoretic framework followed by the historical development of civil-military relations in Greece prior to the rise of Pangalos's dictatorship. We opted for this case study not only because this was the first independent intervention of the military in the political life of Greece but because of the fact that it served as the model followed by the colonel's junta (1967–1974), which, like no other military regime before, lasted the longest managing to disseminate its influence through all pores of Greek society (Papacosma, 1977). Further discussion includes the analysis of the international security environment and process-tracing of its impact on significant changes of institutional organisation and daily practice in civil-military relations through the analysis of the interaction of three fundamental variables: (1) the international security environment; (2) the legal framework (3) specific actions, procedures, and deeds in the interaction of civilian and military elites. The answer to the research question and the central thesis of this paper is that unfavourable international security environment negatively affects the development of civil-military relations, garrison state remaining a possible outcome of political development of societies faced with a prolonged threat of war.

## THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARY RELATIONS ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Harold Lasswell's developmental construct (Lasswell, 1937, 1941, 1997) provides an answer to the primary question as to the moment in which military elite will exert inappropriate influence on government policy and organisation of the society. Garrison state, as an ultimate point paradigm of that inappropriate influence, is the result of the military elite's rise to power and a consequence of prolonged international tensions because of which social freedoms are suppressed in favour of war preparations. Lasswell's construct predicted that a serious and prolonged international tension will result in the rise of garrison state at the expense of civil state, and he viewed garrison state as a possible outcome of the action of two factors: keeping the society in a permanent state of readiness for war, and increased importance of social position of violence specialists. Their interplay would impose the militarisation of the existing civil order abolishing the distinction between civil and military institutions. Garrison state responds to the threat of external and internal danger by repressing certain groups of population. In it, decisions are not made democratically, but dictatorially; parliaments are dissolved or abolished, and the power to enact laws rests with the supreme authority. Instead of elections and laws, governance is executed by regulations, decrees, and orders, with officer corps making the recruitment base for the selection of political rulers whose professional interest is to multiply the quantity of arms and military equipment since they depend on the fear of war as a tool to maintain power. Lasswell concludes his construct by the hypothesis that war itself is perhaps less dangerous for social harmony and proper relations between its segments than perpetual preparations for war.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the first hundred years of modern Greece, the interference of the military in politics was a rule, not an exception, and, according to the value orientation of the protagonists, it could be divided in three phases: the time of modernisation (1832-1897), the age of national enthusiasm (1897-1922) and the era of intensive interference (1922-1936). As early as 1832, several weeks after gaining independence, en-

couraged by England, the army dissolved the national assembly. In 19<sup>th</sup> century, it openly interfered in politics two more times: in 1843, when, supported by the people, compelled the king to assume the role of a constitutional monarch; and in 1862, when, due to the violation of the constitution, one dynasty was overthrown and another, foreign one was established. The officers participated in those coups led by civilians, and in that respect, at that time there was no military class that operated independently from the influence of politicians. The military defeat by the Turkey in 1897 was a turning point in the development of civil-military relations in Greece. It ended the romantic phase of the *Megali Idea (the Great idea)*, the programme for national unification of all Greeks under the roof of one state and Tsarigrad as the capital, starting the period of its active operationalisation. The epoch of an agile realisation of the Megali Idea - two Balkan wars, the First World War and the war with Turkey (1912-1922) - implied armed forces as a key instrument for the achievement of national goals and it definitively gave rise to the military as a political factor. In those ten years, the reputation of the military grew dramatically, and its prestige became deeply rooted in the national consciousness of the Greeks (Brown, 1980; Veremis, 2018; Danopoulos, 1984; Spasojević, 2022).

Intense politicisation occurred during the *Great National Schism* (1915-1922), when social and political elites were divided over which side to support in the First World War. Once it became an arbitrator in this division, it was no longer an easy task to send the military back to barracks, and, just like in Serbia, the first military cliques appeared. In the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Greek military mounted seven military coups, and on at least three more occasions, it imposed its will on civilian authorities through so-called proclamations regarding important political issues. Not only did the military influence the most important state affairs, but it interfered in many other aspects of public life (Veremis, 1978; Mavrogordatos, 2020; Pangalos, 1950). Throughout that entire period the military did not intervene as an autonomous factor. The only exception was the dictatorship of general Pangalos, who methodically consolidated his power and influence on the path to dictatorship acting independently from existing divisions among civilian politicians and believing that early restoration of power to their hands after the mounted coup was wrong (Alivizatos, 1978, 1979; Papacosma, 1977).

### THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF GREECE IN THE EVE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PANGALOS'S DICTATORSHIP

Observed as a constellation of patterns of threats and alliances that influence the behaviour of states and other actors in the international system (Buzan, 1983), the international security environment that Greece found itself in having lost the war against Turkey (October 1922) was extremely unfavourable. The international position of the country was delicate, and the main concern was the national security where the support could primarily be found in the military and diplomatic domain (Svolopoulos, 2019). Greece had hostile relations with majority of its neighbours due to their territorial claims and their attempts to use certain minority groups in Greece to pursue their own goals. The root of the antagonism was the revisionism caused by the feeling of being wronged by the existing *status quo* “because of which revisionist states tend to view security in terms of changing the system and improving their position within it” (Buzan, 1983: 179-180). In late August 1923 the armed conflict broke out with Italy, which held Dodecanese since 1912, resulting in temporarily occupation of Corfu. Bulgaria's insistence on having the Aegean coast—from Thasos to the present Greece-Turkey border—ceded to it was accompanied by frequent raids by its *Komitadji* in the Greek part of Thrace. When in June 1912 Bulgarian government tried to stop the raids of those groups in the Serbian territory, the league of officers mounted a coup in Sofia killing the prime minister (Jovanović, 1938). The relations with Turkey were burdened by numerous disagreements, border disputes, and sensitive matter of identity, like forced exchange of population, the position of Muslim minority in the Western Thrace and the Greeks in Tsarigrad, including the status of the Patriarchate (Mavrogordatos, 2021; Spasojević, 2022).

Though the exchange of population ensured a high level of ethnic homogeneity in Greece, the national minorities were viewed as a threat to the state (Pentzopoulos, 1962). The Jews and Vlachs were

viewed with distrust, as disloyal with tendency to serve foreign interests, while the Turks, Albanian Chams, and Slavs were viewed with fear. The reason behind the fear was not their number, but the fact that they, as compact groups inhabited border areas that directly leaned on their countries of origin, which “could, consequently, support their territorial aspirations at the expense of the integrity of Greek state” (Mavrogordatos, 2021: 231). The turning point in creating the climate of general danger was the transformation of the Socialist Workers’ Party into the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) in December 1924, especially because KKE, as a foreign section of Comintern, adopted its policy on Macedonia and Thrace, which implied territorial breaking of Greece and the loss of sovereignty over these territories (Tsoukalas, 2020). Finally, militaristic regimes in Italy and Turkey, military coup which toppled one of rare Bulgarian peace-loving politicians of that time, as well as incessant politico-security disarray in Albania, made a segment of the mosaic of unfavourable international security environment. As Jovanović (1938: 195–196) states, there was also the fact that “the great powers did not even turn their heads” because “Europe got used to” coups and establishment of dictatorships, and England and France which favoured Greece were preoccupied by mutual competition in the Middle East. All in all, apart from concern, the unfavourable international security environment provoked great dissatisfaction of entire public, including the military. Secret military associations did not hide their desire to establish dictatorship as soon as the first favourable opportunity arises. Opportunity presented itself as the “internal conflict intensified due to heightened international tensions and the need to strengthen the army” (Tsoukalas, 2020: 75).

#### THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND DAILY FUNCTIONING OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS DURING THE RISE OF GENERAL PANGALOS’S DICTATORSHIP

Up until 1922, Greek military was subordinated to executive power. Pursuant to constitutions of 1844 and 1864, king was the supreme commander, and the government was responsible for the organisation and defining missions of the military, while the role of the assembly was to adopt military budget, the form of recruitment and mobilisation (Government Gazette (GG), 1844, 1864). The constitution of 1911 stipulated in its Article 32 that, apart from commanding the military, king proclaimed war, entered into peace agreements, and agreements on the establishment of alliances, while Article 71 strictly forbode officers to be elected as members of parliament, unless they had terminated their active military service prior to announcing their candidacy (GG, 1911). Starting from the autumn 1922, the position of the military strengthened in the Greek society under the pressure of international tensions. Under its dictate, the form of governance was changed and an institutional framework established making it, in formal and legal terms, not only untouchable by civil authorities but rather granted it a legal influence over purely civilian affairs.

The unfavourable international security environment was a platform that propelled Pangalos into the political arena, giving him momentum as he climbed hierarchical ladder, and ultimately launching him onto the dictator’s throne. The key motive behind his political involvement was his disagreement with civilian politicians regarding security and foreign policy. While many of them accepted the consequences of military defeat, he assessed that Turkey and England will start a war over the issue of Mosul, which would provide an opportunity to Greece to reclaim eastern Thrace and seize Constantinople (Psomiades, 1972). To ensure the support of Rome, Pangalos (1928: 19) supported Italian interests in the “consanguineous neighbouring country” Albania, and his “aggressive intentions towards Turkey” were noticed by well-informed Serbian diplomate of that time, the Minister of the Court Milan Antić (ASANU, n.d.). At Pangalos’s initiative, three former prime ministers, head of diplomacy and minister of defence were sentenced to death by firing squad because of the defeat by Turkey. This process undermined from the very foundations the confidence of the Greeks in civil institutions, legitimising future violent and arbitrary interference of the military in the political life which made it the “independent pillar of the government” (Daskarolis, 2012: 16).

In November 1922, when he was, as major-general, appointed as the minister of defence, Pangalos initiated massive armament and procurement of war materiel with a view to preparing for the revenge against Turkey and to annul the Treaty of Lausanne, which he compared to “the agreement between the Spartans and the Persians of 386 BC that was humiliating for Greeks” (Pangalos, 1974: 168). The care for combat readiness, which was reflected in the amount of military budget, was notably higher between 1922 and 1926 at the time of the rise and establishment of Pangalos’s dictatorship. In the period between 1929 and 1935, with the establishment of a favourable international security environment reflected in the agreement on friendship between Greece and Turkey that was signed in 1930, and the prospect of forming a broader Balkan alliance in 1934, the military budget was cut in half, procurements of arms and military equipment limited, and military service reduced to 12 months (Veremis, 2018).

Unfavourable international security environment influenced Pangalos’s meteoric rise through the hierarchical ranks and a transformation of the system of governance. To strengthen Greek negotiating position in Lausanne, the military forces at the border with Turkey were reinforced, which was the task entrusted to Pangalos. Bringing ten divisions with one hundred thousand soldiers into the state of combat readiness served as a trump card in the hands of the head of negotiating team and created the myth of Pangalos as a war leader. The Treaty of Lausanne, by which Greece definitely lost eastern Thrace, provided Pangalos with the reason to act (Dafnis, 1955, 2019; Pangalos, 2019). As soon as he replaced his uniform with civilian attire, and got elected as a member of parliament, on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1924, speaking from the parliamentary podium, he accused civil authorities of having prevented him from using the military to seize Constantinople and attacked the Treaty of Lausanne. He requested for the abolition of the monarchy, and sent a message to civil politicians that the national assembly owed its existence to the military thus being obliged to respect its wishes (Eleftheros Typos (ET), 1924a; Parliamentary Proceedings (PP), 1924a). At the same session, which lasted less than an hour and a half, a decision was made “to topple the dynasty and proclaim a republic” with not a single vote against it (GG, 1924a).

At institutional plane, civil authorities contributed to paving the way for dictatorship, primarily the Prime Minister Alexandros Papanastasiou (Anastasiadis, 2008). In only a month and a half after the abolition of the monarchy, he established the Ministry of Public Order based on decrees with the force of a law, placing gendarmerie and police under its jurisdiction, and appointing Pangalos as its minister with the broadest authorities (GG, 1924c). By the Decree on the Protection of the Republican Order (GG, 1924d), “political offenses” were criminalized, and a special division of the military court in Athens was designated as the competent authority for their prosecution. Minister of Defence appointed the president and judges of the court martial, and there was no right of appeal against its decisions. Concessions to the military also included an increase in salaries and pensions, and a decision was made to promote the leaders of the 1922 coup to the rank of lieutenant general although they had been demobilised and out of active military service (GG, 1924e). Finally, at the proposal of the government, the National Assembly validated “all acts and actions” of the 1922 coup plotters (PP, 1924b). That way, the civil authorities not only legalised the junta, but created a dangerous precedent widely opening the door to any future attempt at military coup. A true reason for passing draconic antidemocratic laws that laid foundations for the introduction of an open dictatorship actually lay in “the concealment of the failure in foreign policy” (Daskarolis, 2012: 34-35).

From the perspective of the military establishment, one of diplomatic failures of the civilians was the protocol between Greece and Bulgaria, which had caused “a reasonable concern” of Belgrade leading to the termination of alliance treaty between Serbia and Greece in November 1924 (Michailidis, 1995: 112). As an advocate of the thesis that without leaning on Serbia, Greece would be “condemned by its very position to become a plaything in the hands of Mediterranean powers” (Vreme, 1928), at a parliamentary debate on this topic, Pangalos stated that “breaking off the alliance with Serbia is the greatest crime” voting for the annulment of the “criminal Protocol” during the roll call vote. Pangalos’s “Serbianisation of the Bulgarians from the Protocol” to appease Belgrade, “was in service of

the dictator's plan to overturn the humiliating peace with Turkey of 1923" (Koliopoulos, 2014: 549-550).

In addition to the failures to confront foreign threats, one of the reasons of the strengthening of military influence at the expense of civil authorities was the fear of KKE as an internal threat supported from abroad. Although an ardent anti-communist, at secret meetings with representatives of the extra-parliamentary and semi-illegal KKE Pangalos indirectly encouraged trade union strikes with a view to increasing instability and overthrowing the current government (Daskarolis, 2012). When May Day demonstrations organised by KKE resulted in a death during the intervention of the police (with Pangalos as responsible minister), accusing the prime minister of "being a Bolshevik sympathiser", the Minister of War, retired General Georgios Kondylis, submitted his resignation in order to exert the pressure and topple the government (ET, 1924b). Pangalos took over the duty of the minister of war, keeping the position of the minister of public order. Soon after, the prime minister submitted his irrevocable resignation, and Pangalos used his appointment as the minister of war to appoint his loyal commanders in Republican battalions in Athens and Thessaloniki. It is precisely these two units that played a crucial role in the establishment of Pangalos's dictatorship.

The decisive influence of international tensions on the militarisation of the political life is evidenced by three articles written by Theodoros Pangalos published in *Eleftheros Typos* immediately prior to the coup. In them, he hinted at the course of events, disclosing to the widest public his views on the internal and foreign policy and the role of the military in them, and he presented the nature of the future rule as the only alternative to the civil authority incapable of responding to challenges, threats and risks that the international security environment presented. In his first article, Pangalos (1925a) adopted extremely militaristic stance. Not mentioning the prime minister, he criticised in general terms the defence and foreign policy of the government. Recalling the "fundamental rule" that "if one wants peace, one prepares for war", he reproached the ministers of war and finance for making the matter of equipping and organisation of Land forces and the Navy a "second-rate issue". Pangalos criticised the government for having broken the alliance ties with Serbia "to the detriment of vital national interests". Warning about "serious external dangers", he stated that the alliances are not made by diplomatic receptions, ceremonies and flattery: "The alliances and friendships are founded exclusively on the number of bayonets".

In the text that followed, Pangalos (1925b) criticised yet again the position of the government regarding the negotiations with Belgrade, but this time directly targeting the Prime Minister Andreas Michalakopoulos. He underlined that Greek nation had experienced even more serious crisis and mishaps than the breakup of the alliance with Serbia, "because it is necessary because of very important common interests of both neighbouring countries". He also advised that it would be useful to consider Serbian budget for 1925-1926: "They are allocating two and a half billion dinars for the military and transportation, and only two or three hundred million dinars for almost all other ministries". In his last article, published one week before the coup, Pangalos (1925c) stated that no one could deny the military - "the guardians of the Fatherland and founders of the Republic" - their right to closely and attentively follow the course and development of the political situation. Instancing the situations when "Greek officers were compelled to temporarily intervene in the political life of the country", he recalled the military interventions from 1909, 1916, and 1922 which are paradigmatic precisely because they represented an unequivocal response to an unfavourable international security environment. Concluding that "each of those circumstances resulted in the salvation of the nation, because the motives that had driven them were noble and idealistic", Pangalos directed an open threat to civil authorities stating that "it depends from the National Assembly and leaders of political parties whether a situation will come yet again that will require a new intervention" which was an "unalienable right envisaged by the tradition of Greek military".

The units under Pangalos's influence mounted the coup on 25th June 1925. In the same Decree by which he accepted the resignation of Michalakopoulos, the President Pavlos Kountouriotis appointed Pangalos as the Prime Minister and Minister of War (GG, 1925a), and the National Assembly passed a

vote of confidence in him on 30<sup>th</sup> June (PP, 1926). Despite the fact that the absolute majority of all members of parliament did not support a vote of confidence in the government, the Assembly nonetheless cloaked the military coup in the guise of a parliamentary mandate. Thus, in formal and legal terms, Pangalos came to power by lawful means. Although his statement that “it was simply an armed protest that lasted but one day” negated the true nature of the coup (ET, 1925), as soon as Pangalos assumed his duty, he made a draconian decree with the force of law abolishing basic political rights and freedoms in Greece. It prohibited public gatherings and all content that criticised or questioned the abolition of the monarchy and proclamation of the Republic: texts, theatre plays, paintings, music, public statements. Article 3 of the Decree envisaged strict sentences of imprisonment for everyone who “raises his hand against the person” or “in any way insults, ridicules or slanders the President of the Republic” (GG, 1925b). Its first victims were journalists, especially those from the daily newspaper *Rizospastis*, the official KKE newspaper. The next to be targeted were the most prominent communist leaders, who were accused of high treason for advocating autonomous status for Macedonia (Veremis, 2018). On 29<sup>th</sup> September, Pangalos’s government adopted a new constitution which - in line with Article 78 that stipulated that “the President of the Republic was the highest state official and commander of the armed forces, although he can never actually command them” - *lege artis* abolished civilian control over the military (GG, 1925c), and dissolved the National Assembly the very same day (GG, 1925d). That concluded the crawling rise of the garrison state at the expense of civil state.

The following phase - the establishment of full control of social dynamics - started in the form of a phenomenon that Lasswell (1941: 459-460) calls “intimidation pattern” whose “convenient scapegoats” were free thinking women, bachelors, and political opponents. The first step was Pangalos’s personal order that, in the name of aesthetic and moral reasons, prohibited women and girls over the age of 12 from wearing skirts in public with hemlines higher than 30 centimetres above the ground (Εβρος, 1925). Then he started prosecuting, arresting, holding public trials, and using newspapers to defame all those who disobeyed his order (Empros, 1926a), and “to increase state revenues and population” he tried to impose additional taxation on unmarried men as an incentive for them to get married (Empros, 1926b). Authorities adopted and systematically enforced those regulations in the context of efforts to establish control and subdue entire Greek society through preparations for war (Pichou & Kapartziani, 2016). The practice of expulsion - the banishment from the country and forced displacement of political opponents to distant islands - had much more detrimental and far-reaching consequences. Thus, General Nikolaos Plastiras found a safe haven in Serbia (ET, 1926c), and Geórgios Papandreou, after refraining from voting confidence to Pangalos’s government, was first incarcerated, and then banished to Naxos (Daskarolis, 2012).

Pangalos announced the establishment of open dictatorship in front of the line of the elite Republican Guard on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1926. Reminding of the historical role of the military in saving “the nation that was in the state of desperation because of the multitude of mistakes made by the parliamentary system”, he accused civilian politicians of “only caring for taking the power”, and of “committing acts of treason”, and announced that he would in the future rely on the confidence of the military while setting the course of the nation destiny towards the restoration of national greatness. “As of tomorrow, I will move from words to deeds, and I take the situation in my own hands with full responsibility enjoying the confidence of the armed forces to save the fatherland”. And then, as *Eleftheros Typos* (1926a) stated, “pandemonium broke out” - present officers interrupted Pangalos’s speech frenetically exclaiming: “Long live the dictatorship! Long live the dictator!” That very evening Pangalos postponed elections for the upper house of parliament for an unlimited period (ET, 1926b), and already the next day, by announcing “a Proclamation to the Greek people, Army and Navy” in the *Official Gazette of the Government* (GG, 1926a), he personally took over the executive and legislative power, claiming the right to change constitution by himself. That officially introduced the dictatorship, while “the iron heel of the long-lasting military crisis subdued civilian influence transferring all power to generals” (Lasswell, 1937: 649).

When President Kounduriotis resigned “because of exhaustion” and retired to the island of Hydra (ET, 1926c, 1926d), forty-eight-year-old Pangalos called for direct presidential elections. Stipulating that the candidates cannot be under 45 years of age nor older than 65 years of age, he excluded the majority of opponents from the presidential race (GG, 1926b). Having taken the presidential position, he kept the function of the prime minister for some time. Immediate examination of the *Historical archives of the National Assembly of Greece* shows that, unlike in previous five years, when Greek parliament in adopted the average of 310 laws per year, in 1926, the governance was carried out by orders, decrees, and regulations. Throughout that entire year, only two laws were passed, the lowest number since the country gained independence, with the exception of the last year of the Colonel’s military junta that rule the country from 1967 to 1974.

## HISTORICAL HERITAGE AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN GREECE TODAY

The new era of civil-military relations in Greece, that ensued after the collapse of military junta (1967-1974), “has a tendency to maintain historical development” and it is burdened by deeply rooted heritage that presents a challenge for democratic civilian control over the armed forces (Kassander, 1989: 293). In that respect, Pangalos’s dictatorship makes a significant high point for the analysis of civil-military relations as a phenomenon in Greek case. In 1974, the military stepped into the period of democratic restoration discredited by unsuccessful mobilisation and the defeat by Turkey in Cyprus, which deprived its request for professional independence of legitimacy and created institutional obstacles that still burden the system of defence. The democratic renewal of the country was directed towards “dejuntification”, limited to coup leaders and the responsible for the violation of human rights to prevent a gap from emerging in the armed forces, and eliminate divisions among political parties (Dokos, 2005: 132). In defence management, political leadership often gave priority to internal political goals over professional competences, especially during the financial crisis (2008–2015), when arbitrary purges often occurred, as well as the interference of political parties in personnel policy. That weakened professional personnel development, while the loyalty to political parties was the key criterion for promotion (Ginis, 2019).

Under Article 45 of the current Constitution of Greece, “the president of the Republic is the supreme commander of the armed forces of the country, where the Government exercises command over them, in line with law” (GG, 1975, 2019). Presidential authority is mostly symbolical, since decisions are made by the prime minister and the Government. The Council of the Government for foreign affairs and defence, that meets on *ad hoc* basis, nominates the Chief of Defence and Service commanders. Essentially, the Chief of Defence is the supreme military commander of the armed forces in crisis and war, while in peacetime, under Article 71 of the *Law on Development of Military Service and Hierarchy of Armed Forces Members*, commanders of all three services report directly to the minister of national defence (GG, 2010). The legislative power has a supporting role in the matters of defence. The Parliament’s Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs has no significant decision-making power, and it never initiated investigations or submitted reports regarding defence policy, including the oversight of spending and the implementation of military procurement (Transparency International, 2020). Historically, the passive role of the Parliament has lasted since Metaxas dictatorship (1936–1940) and the period after the Second World War, when the deep US involvement in the management of national security apparatus of Greece was being hidden from any public oversight (Alivizatos, 1987; Kamaras, 2024).

In last fifty years, Greek military was exposed to “overly tight grip” of civilians (Starčević & Blagojević, 2021), reflected in a subjective control, the civilianization and politicisation, which has undermined its professionalism and meritocracy<sup>1</sup>. The downside of excessive integration of the military in Greek society was a gradual introduction of party politics in the armed forces, especially when it comes to promotions and retirements (Sotiropoulos, 2001; Veremis, 2000). Concurrently with the process of civilianization, insufficient civilian expertise in the field of defence led to the militarisation in very decision-making structures. Namely, the deeply rooted perception of the military as an illegitimate institution hindered the development of security studies as an academic discipline in Greece. Even today, Greek

universities do not have departments or courses, not even in the framework of international relations, dedicated to defence studies, which additionally complicates the training of civilian personnel that could assume responsible duties in the system of defence. For that reason, the Ministry of National Defence faces the challenge of the asymmetry of knowledge and information, since it lacks civilian experts who would counterbalance the power of military leadership (Alivizatos, 1987; Kamaras, 2024).

The restoration of democracy in 1974 was a great turning point in Greek security policy. Greece, under the pressure of international security environment, which is primarily reflected in the Turkish threat, started placing a greater emphasis on the strengthening of its armed forces, than on the membership of NATO and bilateral relations with the USA, which was mostly the result of Turkish membership of NATO and the privileged relationship between Ankara and Washington. Though significant steps were made towards the establishment of civilian control over the Greek military after the fall of the junta, which was partially contributed by the membership of the EU, the heritage of non-democratic escapades, including Pangalos's dictatorship, has led to consequences. They are reflected in politicisation, limited parliamentary oversight and lack of civilian expertise. Civil-military relations still lack equilibrium between functional and social imperative that limits efficient defence policy and exacerbates the challenges for a successful reform of the system and its strengthening. Kamaras (Kamaras, 2024: 19) description of the state as "conceding to the military due to civilian incompetence" illustrates the essence of this complex relations that reflect the challenges for the establishment of a functional and sustainable system of defence in undoubtedly democratically organised Greece.

## CONCLUSION

Accustomed to the established tradition - the glory of the Balkan wars and the First World War - following the tragic defeat in the war with Turkey, and signing the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek military began searching for a new role for itself. To maintain the obtained prestige and status as the arbiter in internal politics, it first placed all the blame on the civilians for the defeat in war and the failure of the *Megali Idea*, and then it assigned itself a new role - saving the country from external and internal enemies. The unfavourable international security environment undoubtedly worked in its favour and facilitated such a scenario. The constellation of pronounced threats and lack of allies, which implied a long-lasting international tension, had a negative effect on civil-military relations not only leading to an increased social importance of violence specialists, but to the rise of military elite to power, as the ultimate point of the inappropriate influence of the military on the politics and social organisation. As Greek civil institutions did not withstand the pressure exerted by the long-lasting international tension, the military elite seized the opportunity to take control over the entire society. At first, freedoms within Greek society were gradually suppressed in favour of preparations for war, and the introduction of the dictatorship ultimately led to the establishment of a garrison-state: the decisions were not made democratically, but dictatorially; the Parliaments was dissolved, instead of laws, the governance was carried out by orders, decrees, and regulations, instead of elections there were plebiscites. The intimidation pattern was implemented against certain social groups. The principle of organisation in the entire state was the principle of leadership, and its leader depended on the fear of war as a means for the maintenance of power.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>It is noteworthy that the Greek language, as the primary source of the lion's share of core concepts in the social and human sciences, uses the same word - η πολιτικοποίηση - for the civilianisation and politicisation.

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## Утицај међународног безбедносног окружења на цивилно-војне односе - случај Пангалосове диктатуре у Грчкој

### Сажетак:

Значајан пораст броја пучева у земљама изложеним дуготрајним спољним претњама и утицајима изнова проблематизује место и улогу оружаних снага у друштву. Већина студија феномен мешања војске у политику види као резултат међудејства унутрашњих снага, док често занемарује утицај међународне конјуктуре на обликовање односа војних и цивилних установа. На примеру диктатуре генерала Теодороса Пангалоса у Грчкој (1925–1926) у раду се истражује утицај међународног безбедносног окружења на цивилно-војне односе. Студија случаја има за циљ да: квалитативном анализом и триангулацијом више типова и врста података, те праћењем процеса интеракције предметних варијабли, истражи, опише и објасни узрочно-последичну везу између њих и испита хипотезу да у друштвима изложеним дуготрајним међународним напетостима јача положај војске на штрб цивилних институција. Резултати истраживања показују да неповољно међународно безбедносно окружење негативно утиче на развој цивилно-војних односа и упућују на закључак да држава-гарнизон, у којој војска преузима већи утицај на политичке процесе, чиме се подрива цивилно управљање, остаје могући исход политичког развоја друштва суочених са дуготрајном спољном претњом.

**Кључне речи:** безбедност, цивилно-војни односи, међународни односи, међународно безбедносно окружење, држава-гарнизон, диктатура, Грчка, Теодорос Пангалос, Харолд Ласвел