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### **Greece: the first Cold War proxy war (and Great Britain's loss of global influence to the U.S. and U.S.S.R).**

Great Britain would be reduced to a lesser status with many of its former overseas territories also seeking out to be independent nations. Most notably India in 1947. Yet Churchill did still strive to have Great Britain be influential in Europe such as the 'percentages agreement' he made with Stalin that was to allow Great Britain have Greece and the Mediterranean region remain as its sphere of influence while other areas of south east Europe such as Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria would fall within a Soviet sphere of influence. (As it was Yugoslavia although it would become Communist under Tito's leadership would end up steering its own independent path).

Thus Greece which had a strong left-wing partisan force would ultimately lose out to its nationalist opposition in the Greek civil war. Stalin would not materially support the left-wing partisan groups as he strategically thought that the West would never allow for the eastern Mediterranean to fall under Soviet influence. (Stalin did have a point as Churchill's push to have North Africa, then Sicily, followed by Italy to be wrestled back from the Germans and to then have British forces go into Athens as the Germans started to roll back their forces towards the end of the war was actually part of a Mediterranean strategy to make sure Great Britain rather than the Soviet Union in some way had greater regional influence). The Greek Left would also fallout with Tito when after Tito and Stalin officially split with each other in 1949 the Greek left chose to remain loyal to Stalin even though it had been the Yugoslavs during WWII who had actually provided much support to Greece's left-wing partisans including even using the Yugoslav side of the border as a sanctuary but by maintaining their loyalty to the Soviet Union the last vestiges of Yugoslavian support ended in 1949. The nationalist army fighting the communists would eventually gain the upper hand both materially and on the battlefield and win the war.

The United States under Truman would take over from Great Britain as the main supporter to those fighting the Greek communists and it was actually the first expression of the 'Truman Doctrine' whereby in this new post-war world the United States would not be isolationist but become more proactive in supporting countries that were deemed to be under Communist threat (although in the case of Greece it could be argued that Truman had both misunderstood or misread Stalin's intention or simply could not fathom that Stalin would do all that he could to support the communist cause in Greece. Yet, one may also subjectively surmise that Stalin now saw it as a lost cause).

*The Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, and the Division of Europe.* Stephen McGlinchey. E-International Relations. (2019).

<https://www.e-ir.info/2009/10/13/the-marshall-plan-the-truman-doctrine-and-the-division-of-europe/>

The Greek Civil War is seen as the first proxy war between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union yet there is the irony that Stalin for his own pragmatic reasons had no desire to strategically pursue an activist policy in Greece thus abandoning the Greek communists to their dire fate. (Much like a fickle Ancient Greek deity would leave Hellenic soldiers to suffer defeat. In the Cold War decades to come one may like to argue that Henry Kissinger as a 'political deity' perhaps became one of the most ruthless *realpolitik* exponents of U.S. foreign policy of his day which was rhetorically akin to the Truman Doctrine (Chile, Cyprus, Timor-Leste, Indochina, Bangladesh etc. are some of the examples among many that first come to mind) which involved Kissinger strategically maintaining that the United States keep having the upper hand over the Soviet Union (or China) despite the nefarious inhumane effects that would occur by way of his interventions or support of internal anti-democratic forces whose only 'legitimacy' was that they were U.S. aligned.