

**DEEPENING THE US-GREECE PARTNERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
COMMON CHALLENGES AND SHARED WORLDVIEW MAKE THE BEST FRIENDS**

Nikolaos STELGIAS¹

Abstract: This paper explores the evolving alliance between the United States and Greece in the 21st century, highlighting how shared challenges, interdependence, and a common worldview have strengthened their partnership. The study employs a multifaceted theoretical framework, integrating Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, to analyze the alliance's development from its Cold War origins to its contemporary shape and growing significance amidst geopolitical shifts in the Eastern Mediterranean. It examines strategic imperatives driving cooperation, including security concerns regarding Russia and Türkiye, and the role of NATO and European Union membership in fostering trust and collaboration. Additionally, the study delves into the evolving identities and perceptions that shape the partnership, emphasizing Greece's position as a stabilizing force in a volatile region. By addressing key questions about the motivations and implications of this alliance, the study provides valuable insights for policymakers and scholars, contributing to the discourse on regional security and the dynamics of international partnerships in a complex geopolitical landscape.

Keywords: *United States, Greece, Eastern Mediterranean.*

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¹ Historian, researcher, writer, and journalist, senior researcher in the Institute of Studies for Politics and Democracy.
Email: stelgias@gmail.com.
ORCID: 0000-0003-0010-4697.

**ABD-YUNANİSTAN ORTAKLIĞININ 21. YÜZYILDA DERİNLEŞTİRİLMESİ:
ORTAK ZORLUKLAR VE ORTAK DÜNYA GÖRÜŞÜ EN İYİ DOSTLARI YARATIR**

Nikolaos STELGIAS

Öz: Bu makale, 21. yüzyılda ABD ve Yunanistan arasında gelişen ittifakı incelemekte ve ortak zorlukların, karşılıklı bağımlılığın ve ortak bir dünya görüşünün bu ortaklığı nasıl güçlendirdiğini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, ittifakın Soğuk Savaş kökenlerinden günümüzdeki haline kadar olan gelişimini ve Doğu Akdeniz’deki jeopolitik değişimlerin ortasında artan önemini analiz etmek amacıyla Realizm, Liberalizm ve Konstrüktivizmi bir araya getiren çok yönlü bir teorik çerçeve kullanmaktadır. Rusya ve Türkiye ile ilgili güvenlik endişeleri ile NATO ve AB üyeliğinin güven ve iş birliğini teşvik etmedeki rolü gibi iş birliğini yönlendiren stratejik zorunluluklar da incelenmektedir. Analiz, Yunanistan’ın istikrarsız bir bölgede istikrar sağlayıcı bir güç olarak konumunu vurgularken, ortaklığı şekillendiren değişen kimlikler ve algıları da gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu ittifakın motivasyonları ve sonuçları üzerine önemli soruları ele alan çalışma, politika yapıcılar ve akademisyenler için değerli bilgiler sunmakta ve karmaşık bir jeopolitik ortamda bölgesel güvenlik ile uluslararası ortaklıkların dinamikleri üzerine tartışmalara katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Yunanistan, Doğu Akdeniz.*

Introduction: The Evolving U.S.-Greece Alliance in the 21st Century

The dawn of the 21st century ushered a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. Amidst these shifts, the United States (U.S.)-Greece alliance has not only endured but also flourished, transcending its Cold War origins to become a robust partnership encompassing defense, security, and economic cooperation. This enduring alliance, a beacon of stability in a shifting world, has piqued the interest of regional players like Russia and Türkiye, who recognize its potential to influence their strategic interests. Understanding the motivations and implications of this evolving partnership is not only important but also crucial for deciphering the region's complex dynamics.

This study delves into the U.S.-Greece alliance in the 21st century, moving beyond a straightforward historical account to provide a nuanced analysis through the combined lenses of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. While existing literature acknowledges the alliance's significance, it often relies on a single theoretical framework, limiting the scope of analysis. This study emphasizes the importance of using a comprehensive theoretical approach to understand the interplay of power, institutions, and shared identities in shaping the relationship. This multi-theoretical approach ensures a thorough and robust analysis of the alliance's dynamics.

The study first establishes a concise historical context to provide a comprehensive assessment, tracing the alliance's evolution from its Cold War beginnings to its post-Cold War adaptation. The historical review illuminates the foundation upon which the 21st century partnership is built. It then moves into a detailed analysis of the alliance's contemporary dynamics, employing the theoretical framework to shed light on the key components that drive its strengthening.

This analysis examines three crucial issues. First, the strategic imperatives that drive closer cooperation: Analyzing how shared security concerns, particularly vis-à-vis Russia and Türkiye, coupled with Greece's strategic location, have incentivized a deeper partnership. Second, the role of institutions and shared values: Exploring the influence of NATO and EU membership, shared principles, and collaborative frameworks in nurturing trust and solidifying the alliance. Third, the evolving identities and perceptions shaping the relationship: Investigating Greece's role in a troubled region. By examining these factors, the study underscores the urgent need to understand the implications of this evolving partnership in the Eastern Mediterranean.

This study provides crucial findings for policymakers, diplomats, and academics looking to thoroughly understand the intricate geopolitical landscape in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The article makes a significant contribution to the current dialogue on regional security by presenting a detailed examination of the alliance between the U.S. and Greece. It underscores the complex and multidimensional nature of modern-day alliances and their influence on regional power dynamics.

While valuable, the existing literature on the U.S.-Greece alliance falls short of capturing the full complexity of the relationship, especially in the wake of the significant geopolitical shifts of the early 2020s. Works like Rizas (2009)² and Kitroeff (2011)³ provide crucial historical background but predate the current dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean. More recent analyses, such as those by Mikelis and Kyriakos (2015)⁴ and Tziarras (2023)⁵ focus on specific aspects of the relationship, like defense cooperation or energy security, rather than offering a holistic view. To address this gap, the study offers a thorough analysis that encompasses the recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. This includes the reemergence of great power competition, the EastMed pipeline project, and the ongoing tensions between Greece and Türkiye. By employing a multi-theoretical framework, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of the alliance's motivations and implications, contributing fresh insights to the existing literature and informing contemporary policy debates.

1. Theoretical Framework: The Quest for Security, Interdependence, and Shared Identities

This study delves into the complex dynamics of the U.S.-Greece relationship, a significant case study in International Relations and Political Science. By employing Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, three prominent schools of thought, we aim to illuminate the nature and

² Sotiris Rizas (2009), "Managing a Conflict between Allies: United States Policy towards Greece and Turkey in Relation to the Aegean Dispute, 1974-76", *Cold War History*, Vol. 9, no: 3, pp. 367-387.

³ Alexander Kitroeff (2011), "Greece and the US during the Cold War", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, no: 5, November 2011, pp. 929-932.

⁴ Kyriakos Mikelis (2015), "Realist Stronghold in the Land of Thucydides? Appraising and Resisting a Realist Tradition in Greece", *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, Vol. 4, no: 4, pp. 15-32.

⁵ Zenonas Tziarras (2023), "Drivers of Crisis in the Greek-Turkish Protracted Conflict: A Neoclassical Realist Reading", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 05.08.2023, Date of Accession: 01.08.2024 from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14683857.2023.2243699>.

evolution of this strategic partnership, which has implications for the broader understanding of international alliances and power dynamics.

Waltz's Structural Realism posits that states prioritize power and self-interest in the anarchic international system, primarily focusing on security because of the lack of a global sovereign. This constant potential for conflict incentivizes states to forge alliances to balance power against potential adversaries.⁶ Even states with benign intentions are trapped in a security dilemma within this system. As they bolster their defenses, other states perceive it as a threat and reciprocate, potentially leading to arms races and conflict, even if neither party desires it.⁷ The U.S.-Greece alliance, particularly during the Cold War, can be analyzed through the realist prism. Both states, faced with the Soviet threat, sought security through collective defense within NATO. In contemporary times, emerging complexities have fostered a closer, multifaceted partnership between the two nations, as evidenced in the subsequent analysis. This perspective suggests that a shared imperative and specifically the need to counter a common threat within a volatile global order was the primary force that drove the alliance.

While Waltz emphasizes balancing against threats, realist scholar Randall Schweller offers an alternative perspective on alliance formation: bandwagoning. Schweller's bandwagon theory argues that states, particularly those seeking to revise the existing order, might align with a more robust power, not out of fear but to partake in the spoils of potential victory. Schweller identifies four types of strategies: "jackal" (joining to profit from conflict), "piling on" (siding with the likely victor), "wave of the future" (aligning with a rising power), and "contagion" (following the lead of others).⁸ A nuanced historical analysis of U.S.-Greece relations necessitates examining whether Greece's alignment with the U.S. falls within the parameters of the bandwagon theory. Specifically, this study seeks to determine whether Greece views its relationship with the U.S. as instrumental in advancing its national interests within a U.S.-led global order, a geopolitical structure that has significantly influenced the dynamics of the U.S.-

⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz (2010), *Theory of International Politics*, Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, pp. 102-128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-51.

⁸ Randall L. Schweller (1994), "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In", *International Security*, Vol. 19, no: 1, pp. 72-107.

Greece relationship. The subsequent sections will endeavor to address this question comprehensively.

In contrast to Realism's emphasis on power, Liberalism underscores the potential for cooperation and interdependence between states.⁹ Liberals suggest that international institutions, common norms, and economic ties can mitigate the dangers of anarchy. Liberalism argues that institutions like the United Nations and NATO provide platforms for communication and diplomacy, reducing the likelihood of miscalculation and conflict. Furthermore, increasing economic interdependence promotes shared interests, rendering conflict less appealing.¹⁰ The relationship between the U.S. and Greece extends beyond security cooperation. As NATO members, with economic ties and shared democratic values, the two countries are committed to a rules-based global order.

Constructivism highlights the role of shared ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior. It claims that both material factors and the social construction of reality influence the international system. Constructivists, such as Alexander Wendt, challenge the materialist focus of Realism. Wendt argues that ideas and culture actively shape power dynamics and national interests. For instance, sovereignty only holds power because states recognize and adhere to it as a shared norm.¹¹ Shared values, like democracy and human rights, are emphasized by constructivists as a basis for alliances.¹² These shared understandings create a sense of community and common purpose, leading to cooperation.¹³ The U.S.-Greece alliance has a constructive perspective, particularly in the post-Cold War era. Both states identify as democracies, share values such as the rule of law, and often frame their cooperation to promote these values globally. Constructivists argue that these shared beliefs contribute to the alliance's resilience even as material threats evolve.

⁹ M. Bimbo Ogunbanjo (2020), "Realism and Liberalism: How Relevant Are They for Explaining or Understanding the Globalization of World Politics?", *NIU Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 5, no: 2, pp. 105-125.

¹⁰ Robert Owen Keohane & Joseph S. Nye (1977), *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Little, Brown.

¹¹ Alexander Wendt (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations*, Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹² Martha Finnemore (1996), *National Interests in International Society*, *Cornell Studies in Political Economy*, Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

¹³ Emanuel Adler (1997), "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 3, no: 3, pp. 319-363.

Using Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism simultaneously can be tricky because of their differing assumptions. However, rather than viewing them as mutually exclusive, this study leverages their combined explanatory power through a complementary lens. In other words, we argue that although these theories offer distinct lenses, they are not mutually exclusive but provide complementary insights into the complexities of the U.S.-Greece relationship. Examining the U.S.-Greece partnership through each theoretical lens illuminates different facets of the relationship. Realism helps explain the initial security-driven rationale and the continuous maneuvering within the global power balance. The Realism school provides the foundation by explaining how the alliance was formed during the Cold War based on security concerns. It also allows analyzing how changing power dynamics (e.g., the rise of new threats) continue to influence the relationship. Liberalism sheds light on the role of shared institutions and economic ties in fostering cooperation and deepening interdependence. The liberal school explains that deepening cooperation is beyond security matters. It helps us understand how shared institutions like NATO and economic ties create interdependence and incentivize continued partnership. The school of Constructivism adds depth by exploring the role of shared values and identities. This lens is crucial for understanding the resilience of the alliance even as immediate Cold War threats have receded. Finally, Constructivism highlights the importance of shared democratic values and identities in shaping perceptions and sustaining the partnership beyond immediate security concerns. Through a careful synthesis of these perspectives, this study seeks to present a holistic and intricate analysis of the U.S.-Greece alliance, shedding light on its development and transformations over the years. This approach allows for a richer, more nuanced analysis of the U.S.-Greece relationship than any single theory could provide in isolation.

2. The U.S.-Greece Alliance through the 20th Century: A Short Glimpse of the Past

The U.S.-Greece alliance is not a static picture, but a constantly growing tapestry woven from historical events, geopolitical realities, and a deep-rooted commitment to shared democratic values. This shared commitment to democracy is a unifying force in the partnership, even when tension and disagreement inevitably arise, highlighting the complex interplay of national interests and ideological commitments. Understanding this interplay is crucial to navigating the future of U.S.-Greece relations.

While formal U.S.-Greece diplomatic relations began in 1868, the foundation for deeper ties emerged towards the end of the century, fueled by significant Greek immigration to the United States.¹⁴ World War II and its aftermath forged the modern U.S.-Greece relationship. With Greece devastated by war and facing a communist insurgency, the United States recognized the country's strategic importance in the emerging Cold War order and stepped in to provide crucial support.¹⁵ The Truman Doctrine, articulated in 1947, marked a watershed moment in U.S.-Greece relations. Driven by the fear of Soviet expansionism, the doctrine pledged American support to countries resisting communist pressure. Greece, caught in a violent civil war with communist forces, emerged as a major recipient.¹⁶ The Marshall Plan that followed (1948) offered crucial economic help, aiding the reconstruction of Greece's devastated infrastructure and setting the stage for future economic development.¹⁷ The U.S. aid significantly strengthened the National Army, which since the end of 1946 had been facing the Democratic Army that was staffed by Greek communists and their allies in various parts of the country. With this support, in August 1949, the internationally recognized Greek government defeated the "*Provisional Democratic Government*" supported by the Communist Party of Greece and its allies.¹⁸ Greece became a crucial U.S. ally during the Cold War, strengthening NATO's southeastern defense and blocking Soviet influence in the Mediterranean. American help during this period encompassed more than mere financial support; it advanced a specific model of capitalism and democracy reflective of American ideals.¹⁹ The U.S.'s fixation on containing communism led to overlooking or even silently supporting undemocratic regimes as long as they maintained a solid anti-communist stance.

¹⁴ Lena Korma (2017), "The Historiography of the Greek Diaspora and Migration in the Twentieth Century", *Historiein*, Vol. 16, no: 1-2, pp. 47-73.

¹⁵ John O. Iatrides (1987), "Perceptions of Soviet Involvement in the Greek Civil War 1945-1949", in (eds. by Lars Bærentzen & John O Iatrides & Ole Langwitz Smith) *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, pp. 225-248.

¹⁶ Χριστόφορος Θ. Λαζάρης (2022), *Η Πορεία Της Ελλάδας. Από Την Εποχή Τον Εμφυλίου Πολέμου Ως Την Εποχή Της Παγκοσμιοποίησης*, Αθήνα : Κορφή.

¹⁷ David Brewer (2016), *Greece, the Decade of War: Occupation, Resistance and Civil War*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 261-271.

¹⁸ Αλβανός Ραϊμάνδος (2022), *Ο Ελληνικός Εμφύλιος. Μνήμες Σε Πόλεμος Και Σύγχρονες Πολιτικές Ταυτότητες*, Αθήνα: Επίκεντρο, pp. 127-132.

¹⁹ William I. Hitchcock (2008), *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, Simon and Schuster.

The United States had conflicting emotions about the military junta that took control in Greece in 1967. The financial and military aid from Washington to the oppressive regime caused anger and resentment in Greece, revealing a complicated situation. This period showcases the divergence between the U.S.'s commitment to democracy and its pursuit of strategic goals, bringing attention to the inherent contradictions in its foreign policy.²⁰ The junta's downfall in 1974, triggered partly by the Cyprus Conflict and Türkiye's subsequent intervention to the island, led to a decline in U.S.-Greece relations and a lingering atmosphere of suspicion and animosity.²¹ The restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974 was a turning point that allowed for the reevaluation and rebuilding of strained diplomatic relations between the two countries. Under President Carter, the U.S. shifted its approach during the same period, emphasizing support for democratic principles.²² The 1980s and 1990s saw a gradual improvement in relations, characterized by increased collaboration on various issues, including trade, security, and counterterrorism.²³ The U.S. began engaging with Greece in a broader Transatlantic context after Greece became a member of the European Union in 1981.²⁴

Greece's EU membership provided a new economic and political support source, weakening its reliance on the United States. This newfound autonomy enabled Greece to pursue a distinctly "European" and independent foreign policy across various fronts. During this period, the Panhellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) ascended to power in Athens, garnering significant support from substantial segments of society through populist rhetoric that was often critical of the West and especially NATO. During this time, the U.S.-Greece relations were also influenced by the actions of the Greek terrorist group "17 November". American diplomats and military personnel

²⁰ James Edward Miller (2009), *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History and Power, 1950-1974*, Chapel Hill (N. C.): University of North Carolina Press.

²¹ Eirini Karamouzi (2014), *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War, 1974-1979: The Second Enlargement*, Palgrave Macmillan.

²² Kenton Clymer (2003), "Jimmy Carter, Human Rights, and Cambodia", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 27, no: 2, pp. 245-278.

²³ Antonis Klapsis (2022), "The Greek Transition to Democracy", in (eds. by ed. Antonios V. Klapsis et al.) *The Greek Junta and the International System: A Case Study of Southern European Dictatorships, 1967-74*, London & New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group; Theodore A. Coulombis (1983), *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle*, New York, N.Y: Praeger.

²⁴ Nimrod Goren & Muriel Asseburg & Thanos Dokos & Ehud Eiran & Gabriel Mitchell & Panayotis Tsakonas (2018), "The Eastern Mediterranean: New Dynamics and Potential for Cooperation", EuroMeSCo Joint Policy Study, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), March 2018, Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://www.euromesco.net/publication/the-eastern-mediterranean-new-dynamics-and-potential-for-cooperation/>.

were targeted by the group, leading to tension between the two nations. The Greek government was compelled by the U.S. to act against the organization.²⁵

Despite ideological and political differences, Athens and Washington cooperated extensively and found areas of agreement. Greece played a significant role in supporting the U.S. during the First Gulf War and the War on Terror.²⁶ However, its stance shifted on the breakup of Yugoslavia and the official name change of Skopje (later known as North Macedonia).²⁷

3. The U.S.-Greece Alliance in the 21st Century: The Common Challenges and Shared Worldview Make the Best Friends

3.1. Balancing Powers: The U.S.-Greece Partnership Amidst Regional Challenges

As stated above, the United States and Greece forged a complex collaboration in the mid-20th century, particularly in the aftermath of World War II and during the Cold War. These two NATO partners collaborated throughout the Cold War era despite facing multiple obstacles. Starting in the 2010s, the partnership took on new dimensions, with closer ties in defense, economy, and culture. This evolution raises several questions: What factors account for this development? Why did the United States increasingly rely on Greece to promote its regional interests? What prompted Athens to seek greater collaboration with Washington during this specific historical juncture? To address these questions, we use theoretical frameworks from the schools of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. These theories share a common focus on the uncertain environment of International Relations. Realism suggests that states are driven to prioritize their security and national interests in an uncertain international reality. In this context, the realist perspective is integral in understanding the motivations behind the expanding U.S.-Greece partnership.

²⁵ George. Kassimeris (2001), *Europe's Last Red Terrorists: The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*, New York: New York University Press.

²⁶ Christos Kassimeris (2010), *Greece and the American Embrace: Greek Foreign Policy Towards Turkey, the US and the Western Alliance*, London & New York: Tauris Academic Publishers.

²⁷ Panagiotis C. Ioakimidis (2019), "The Europeanisation of Greece's Foreign Policy: Progress and Problems", in (eds. by Achilleas Mitsos & Elias Mossialos) *Contemporary Greece and Europe*, Oxon & New York: Taylor & Francis; Asteris Huliaras & Charalambos Tsardanidis (2006), "(Mis)Understanding the Balkans: Greek Geopolitical Codes of the Post-Communist Era", *Geopolitics*, Vol. 11, no: 3, pp. 465-483; Theodore C. Kariotis (1992), *The Greek Socialist Experiment: Papandreou's Greece 1981-1989*, Pella Pub Co; Evangelos Kofos (2005), "Athens – Skopje: An Uneasy Symbiosis", EΛIAMEΠ, Athens, 30.09.2005, Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://www.eliamep.gr/en/publication/athens-skopje-an-uneasy-symbiosis/>.

In the early 2010s, the complex dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean -characterized by unresolved issues in Cyprus and Palestine and socio-economic turmoil- became even more intricate because of several recent developments. The Western bloc was grappling with the fallout from a new financial crisis while rising challenges from Russia and China increasingly confronted the U.S. The Arab Spring triggered significant socio-political upheavals in the Levant.²⁸ During this period, Moscow's and Ankara's actions affected the region's developments significantly. In the 2010s, as Russia's relations with the West rapidly deteriorated -especially following its actions in Ukraine-, Moscow found itself increasingly at odds with Western powers. With the annexation of Crimea, relations between Russia and the West took a significant turn for the worse.²⁹ Concurrently, Türkiye's pursuit of an independent foreign policy led to confrontations with its NATO allies, particularly the United States. Moreover, from 2015 onwards, especially after the failed coup attempt (2016), U.S.-Türkiye relations faced considerable challenges.³⁰ The repercussions of the failed coup, refugee crisis, and conflicts in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean added strain to Türkiye's ties with Greece.³¹

Another level of complexity was introduced by discovering additional energy reserves in the region.³² During the same period, Russia rekindled its interest in the Eastern Mediterranean by getting involved in the Syrian crisis.³³ This development coincided with increasing diplomatic tensions between China and the West³⁴ as well as Türkiye's attempts to expand its regional influence.³⁵ To ensure a higher level of security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean

²⁸ Peter Seeberg (2015), "Guest Editor's Introduction: An Arab World in Transition, Political Changes and Theoretical Discussions in a Post-'Arab Spring' Scenario", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 24, no: 1, pp. 1-7; Ziya Öniş (2014), "Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Regional Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 19, no: 2, pp. 203-219.

²⁹ Paul Kubicek (2023), *Theoretical Approaches to Turkish Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 2023.

³⁰ Alan Makovsky (2020), "Problematic Prospects for US-Turkish Ties in the Biden Era Human Rights, Sanctions Likely among Early Tests", SWP Comment.

³¹ Al Sharq Strategic Research (2020), "The Eastern Mediterranean Crisis: Scenarios and Implications", 20.12.2020, Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://research.sharqforum.org/2020/12/18/eastern-mediterranean-crisis/>.

³² Sohbet Karbuz (2014), "EU-Turkey Energy Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities", IAI Working Papers.

³³ Andreas Stergiou (2017), "Russia's Energy and Defense Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean", *Economics World*, Vol. 5, no: 2, pp. 101-119.

³⁴ Umbreen Javaid & Punjab Meer Waheed (2016), "China's Foreign Policy in the Middle East", *Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, no: 2, pp. 321-331.

³⁵ Meliha Benli Altunışık (2013), "The Middle East in Turkey-USA Relations: Managing the Alliance", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, no: 2, pp. 157-173; E. Fuat Keyman (2016), "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Arab Spring Era: From Proactive to Buffer State", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, no: 12, pp. 2274-2287;

region³⁶, the U.S. sought to strengthen its alliance with Greece in response to growing geopolitical challenges.³⁷ Both parties benefited from this strategic alignment. Greece's strategically important location that allows her to support NATO's eastern flank, enhance energy security in Southeastern Europe, and promote regional partnerships, made it a valuable ally for the U.S.³⁸ At the same time, the U.S. provided Greece with the opportunity to strengthen national security and advance strategic interests through a closer alliance.³⁹ This mutual benefit underscores the fact that the U.S.-Greece partnership is based on equality and fairness, ensuring that both parties gain from the relationship.

Washington and Athens have taken a realistic approach to their bilateral relations, resulting in various initiatives that aim to enhance their alliance. This involves a pragmatic assessment of their respective national interests and the geopolitical realities of the region. The two countries have focused on strengthening the United States military capabilities in Greece, forging new collaborative agreements across different sectors, and promoting Greece's partnerships with other U.S. regional partners. In 2019, the two countries signed a revised defense cooperation agreement that enabled the U.S. military to increase its presence in Greece. This involves utilizing the Souda Base in Crete and deploying American troops to other Greek military installations.⁴⁰ In the same period, Greece strengthened its collaborative network with several Eastern Mediterranean countries, which all happened to be U.S. allies. The strategic alignment primarily stems from a shared focus on energy security, regional stability, and addressing common challenges, particularly from Türkiye. Greece and Cyprus have shown a more robust

Aaron Stein (2014), *Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Davutoglu, the AKP and the Pursuit of Regional Order*, Abingdon: Taylor & Francis.

³⁶ Spyridon N. Litsas (2020), "The US in the Eastern Mediterranean: Historical and Political Considerations", in *US Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 41-101.

³⁷ Ehsan Bakhshandeh & Yasaman Yeganeh (2023), "Geopolitical Transformation in Eastern Mediterranean; Restructuring Role of Greece and the Impact of Abraham Accord", *International Studies*, Vol. 60, no: 2, pp. 231-249.

³⁸ Katerina Sokou (2023), "Αξιοποιώντας Το Ιστορικό Υψηλό Των Ελληνοαμερικανικών Σχέσεων", Athens, 26.09.2023, Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://www.eliamep.gr/publication/αξιοποιώντας-το-υψηλό-ιστορικό-των-ελ/>.

³⁹ Aristotle Tziampiris (2015), *The Emergence of Israeli-Greek Cooperation*, Cham: Springer International Publishing; Aristotle Tziampiris (2021), "Greek Foreign Policy in the New Eastern Mediterranean", in (eds. by Aristotle Tziampiris & Foteini Asderaki) *The New Eastern Mediterranean Transformed*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 1-29.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State (2019), "US-Greece Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement", Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://www.state.gov/u-s-greece-mutual-defense-cooperation-agreement/>.

partnership by actively collaborating on the EastMed pipeline project, which is a prime example of their joint efforts in energy exploration. This project aims to establish a direct route for transporting natural gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe, circumventing Türkiye.⁴¹ Greece has developed close relationships with Israel, participating in shared military drills and trilateral meetings that strengthen its security partnership.⁴² The partnership with Saudi Arabia was also developed, focusing on economic cooperation and defense. Likewise, Greece has found a valuable ally in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as they have strengthened their trade and investment ties, focusing on the technology and tourism industries.⁴³

3.2. Overcoming Anarchy: The Role of International Norms, Rules, and Organizations in Strengthening U.S.-Greece Relations

The realist framework provides an important insight into the influential factors driving the alliance between the United States and Greece today. Realism, and especially the focus on security concerns, forms a solid basis for comprehending the fundamental dynamics of the U.S.-Greece relationship. The liberal school, as a supportive element for our analysis, enhances our comprehension by highlighting the importance of economic interdependence and institutional cooperation in this partnership, offering valuable insights. The U.S.-Greece alliance in the contemporary global landscape is focused on security concerns, economic interdependence, and institutional collaboration.

When the U.S.-Greece alliance is viewed through the liberal lens, it is made clear that economic interdependence plays a crucial role in its reinforcement. Trade and investment have become vital aspects of the developing economic relationship between the U.S. and Greece. The economic benefits of this interdependence are significant, with both countries gaining access to new markets and resources. Recent statistics underline the growing economic ties between the two nations. In 2011, U.S. exports to Greece totaled approximately \$1.1 billion, while imports

⁴¹ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (2020), “The Eastern Mediterranean as an Emerging Crisis Zone: Greece and Cyprus in a Volatile Regional Environment”, *Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters: Perspectives on Emerging Geopolitical Realities*, Ankara Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS4Security), p. 1.

⁴² Ioannis Th. Mazis & Markos I. Troulis (2020), “Israeli–Greek Common Security Concerns: On the Deterrence of Turkey’s Adventurism”, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 14, no: 3, pp. 447-456.

⁴³ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis & Gerasimos Tsourapas (2024), “Understanding Greece’s New Foreign Policy towards the Arab World: Instrumentalisation, Balancing, and Emerging Opportunities”, *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 29, no: 3, pp. 307-330.

from Greece amounted to about \$798 million. By 2023, U.S. exports to Greece had increased to roughly \$1.75 billion, and imports had risen to around \$2.06 billion.⁴⁴ This economic interdependence favors a sense of mutual benefit and discourages actions that might jeopardize the financial well-being of either nation.

The liberal perspective also underscores the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation and addressing everyday challenges. A prime example is the U.S.'s support for Greece during the Greek debt crisis, channeled through institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF, as a global financial institution, provided financial assistance to Greece in the form of loans and debt restructuring programs. While this support was met with debate, it nevertheless serves as proof of the role that international cooperation has in mitigating economic crises and maintaining global financial stability.⁴⁵

The U.S.-Greece partnership flourishes within the broader contexts of NATO and the European Union. These organizations provide platforms for collaborative problem-solving and action across crucial areas like security and economic progress. Notably, NATO membership has played a pivotal role in strengthening the U.S.-Greece alliance. It has created a robust institutional structure that has facilitated the growth and development of this partnership.⁴⁶ The mutual commitment to collective defense and security principles, as enshrined in the NATO framework, has further solidified the ties binding Greece, the U.S., and their regional allies together. The U.S. Congress has acknowledged Greece's vital role as "*a reliable NATO ally which promotes security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean*".⁴⁷

⁴⁴ U.S. Census Bureau (2024), "International Trade", Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 from <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4840.html>.

⁴⁵ Markus K. Brunnermeier & Harold James & Jean-Pierre Landau (2016), *The Euro and the Battle of Ideas*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

⁴⁶ Aristotle Tziampiris (2015), *The Emergence of Israeli-Greek Cooperation*; Aristotle Tziampiris (2021), "Greek Foreign Policy in the New Eastern Mediterranean".

⁴⁷ Foreign Relations Committee (2021), "Menendez, Rubio Introduce US-Greece Defense And...", 09.06.2021, Date of Accession: 10.05.2024 <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/menendez-rubio-introduce-us-greece-defense-and-interparliamentary-partnership-act-of-2021>.

Furthermore, Greece's participation in both NATO and the European Union is a testament to its shared dedication to democratic principles, legal fairness, and human rights.⁴⁸ This shared commitment paves the way for multidimensional cooperation, ultimately reinforcing its bond with the United States. A clear example of this is the U.S.'s recent upgrade of strategic facilities in Alexandroupolis or Alexandroupoli (Dedeağaç). The increased U.S. presence near the Greece-Türkiye border underscores the strategic partnership between the United States and Greece, which has flourished within NATO in the past decade. This development has raised concerns in Ankara, which feels overlooked and sidelined by two of its NATO allies. Türkiye claims the U.S. is engaging in military actions that exclude Türkiye and do not consider its national interests.⁴⁹ Recent analyses show that the transformation of Alexandroupolis, a formerly quiet Greek port, into a significant U.S. military logistics hub, is closely linked to the ongoing geopolitical shifts resulting from the U.S.-Russia dynamic and the conflict in Ukraine.⁵⁰ The evolving dynamics surrounding Alexandroupolis, particularly its transformation into a vital trade hub that may offer an alternative supply route to the Black Sea, reflect the broader context of a deepening U.S.-Greece partnership. Undoubtedly, this strengthened alliance allows the United States to reduce its reliance on Türkiye. However, it also raises concerns about the potential impact on Türkiye's regional strategic position.

Since joining the European Union, Greece's connection with the United States has undergone a profound shift. The shared values that form the foundation of EU-U.S. relations have created a strong framework for Greek-American cooperation. Greece's enhanced international stature as an EU member creates a favorable environment for fostering closer ties with the United States, further strengthening this alignment. Greece's membership in the EU has not only given the country a renewed international identity but also a foreign policy agenda that frequently coincides with that of the U.S. and its Western allies. The convergence of interests between

⁴⁸ Alexandra Shea (2023), "Alexandroupoli Port Continues Growth from US and NATO Presence", DVIDS, 18.05.2023, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 from <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/445098/alexandroupoli-port-continues-growth-us-and-nato-presence>.

⁴⁹ *Greek City Times* (2022), "Turkish Analyst: US Base In Alexandroupolis Wants To Prevent Our 'Ability To Act' On The Evros", 15.11.2022, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 from <https://greekcitytimes.com/2022/11/15/turkish-analyst-alexandroupolis/>.

⁵⁰ Niki Kitsantonis & Anatoly Kurmanaev (2022), "Sleepy Greek Port Becomes US Arms Hub, as Ukraine War Reshapes Region", *The New York Times*, 18.08.2022, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/18/world/europe/greece-port-russia-ukraine-weapons.html>.

Greece and the U.S. enables them to engage based on shared values and objectives, fostering a stronger and more diverse bilateral relationship.⁵¹

3.3. The Constructivist Lens: Shared Values and Identities in U.S.-Greece Relations

When analyzing the strengthening bonds between the U.S. and Greece, it is crucial to consider the role of Constructivism, in addition to Realism and Liberalism. The constructivist theory, which emphasizes the significance of norms, identities, and shared values in shaping international relations, is particularly relevant in the context of U.S.-Greece relations. This theory suggests that the actions of states are not solely determined by material factors, such as military power or economic resources, but are also influenced by shared beliefs, norms, and identities. These elements play a vital role in the development of the U.S.-Greece relationship.

Despite the changing political landscapes in Washington and Athens, the enduring alliance between the U.S. and Greece has remained unwavering. From SYRIZA's ascent to power in Greece through Donald Trump's presidency and into President Joe Biden's administration, the two nations have consistently upheld their shared principles, demonstrating the resilience of their relationship.

In 2015, SYRIZA's rise to power sparked concerns about Greece's ties to Euro-Atlantic institutions and the potential alignment with non-Western nations. However, these fears were dispelled when Greece surprised everyone by agreeing to a new Eurozone bailout the following summer.⁵² The shared liberal conceptual approach to foreign policy during this period, bolstered by mutual recognition of the escalating challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean and the need for enhanced collaboration, marked a significant shift in Greek foreign policy. The Greek Prime Minister's public praise of President Trump for their shared values signaled a transition from

⁵¹ Spyros Economides (2005), "The Europeanisation of Greek Foreign Policy", *West European Politics*, Vol. 28, no: 2, pp. 471-491.

⁵² Angelos Chrysosogelos (2017), "Populism in Foreign Policy", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Oxford University Press; Angelos Chrysosogelos (2017), "The People in the 'Here and Now': Populism, Modernization and the State in Greece", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 38, no: 4, pp. 473-487; Angelos Chrysosogelos (2021), "The Dog That Barked but Did Not Bite: Greek Foreign Policy under the Populist Coalition of SYRIZA-Independent Greeks, 2015-2019", *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 19, no: 6, pp. 722-738.

populism to Realism.⁵³ Moving forward to 2022, President Joe Biden's recent statement further solidifies the shared worldview that underpins the U.S.-Greece alliance.⁵⁴

In addition, the constructivist approach underscores the significance of identity in determining how states behave and interact with one another. Greece's historical legacy as the birthplace of democracy aligns with the United States' self-identity as a defender of democratic principles. This shared historical narrative not only strengthens the bond between the two nations but also lays the groundwork for their strategic partnership. As U.S. President Biden emphasizes, *"The concept of democracy originated in ancient Greece, where prominent thinkers articulated the notion of 'We the People'. The citizens of Greece and the United States did not simply inherit democracy; rather, they must actively defend and champion it."*⁵⁵

When examining the constructivist approach to U.S.-Greece's cooperation, one crucial factor is their shared worldview, which shapes their perspectives and interactions. Over the years, the White House has been home to three different administrations. The Democratic Party saw two members, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, take office, while Donald Trump represented the Republican Party. Despite their different approaches, Washington actively sought cooperation from Greece in various areas. Throughout this period, the Greek government has seen a back-and-forth between two political powers; the leftist party SYRIZA and the conservative party New Democracy (ND). Despite their opposing ideologies, both parties have come together in their liberal interpretation of the international order, resulting in a more substantial alignment

⁵³ Kevin Liptak (2017), "Greece's Alexis Tsipras Praises Trump over 'Common Values'", *CNN*, 17.10.2017, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/17/politics/president-donald-trump-alexis-tsipras-greece-evil/index.html>.

⁵⁴ The White House (2022), "Remarks By President Biden, First Lady Jill Biden, and Prime Minister Mitsotakis Of Greece at a Reception Honoring Greek American Relations | The White House", 16.05.2022, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/05/16/remarks-by-president-biden-first-lady-jill-biden-and-prime-minister-mitsotakis-of-greece-at-a-reception-honoring-greek-american-relations/>.

⁵⁵ The White House (2024), "Remarks by President Biden at Greek Independence Day Reception | The White House", 04.04.2024, Date of Accession: 20.05.2024 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/04/04/remarks-by-president-biden-at-greek-independence-day-reception-2/>.

with Washington. In terms of the economy, the Greek administrations have adopted a neoliberal approach that mirrors the economic policies of their American counterparts.⁵⁶

Conclusion: A Framework for Analyzing an Enduring Legacy, the Primacy of Realism

The alliance between the United States and Greece in the 21st century is a robust and enduring relationship, shaped by various historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors. Examining this partnership through the lenses of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism reveals the interplay of multiple forces that have contributed to its enduring strength and resilience.

Shared democratic values and membership in organizations like NATO and the European Union not only form a solid foundation for the U.S.-Greece relationship but also create a strong sense of unity and common purpose. The historical significance of Greek democracy resonates strongly within the American narrative, further strengthening this sense of shared identity. Moreover, economic ties and cooperation within international institutions highlight the role of liberal principles in fostering collaboration between the two nations.

However, the realist perspective gains prominence as the Eastern Mediterranean region becomes increasingly strategically significant, especially considering the assertive actions of Russia and Türkiye. The security dilemma, a cornerstone of Realism, compels both the United States and Greece to reinforce their alliance in response to mutual threats. Greece's strategic position and increasing military capabilities make it an essential ally for the U.S. in projecting power and safeguarding its interests in this volatile region. The upgrading of U.S. Army bases in Greece and the escalation of joint military exercises are recent developments that emphasize the alliance's Realism and the U.S.'s strategic reliance on this partnership.

While shared values and institutional cooperation undeniably contribute to the partnership's durability, the alignment of security interests, shaped by regional power dynamics and geopolitical concerns, ultimately steers the alliance's strategic course. Thus, while acknowledging the influence of liberal and constructivist elements, Realism, focusing on power

⁵⁶ Leonidas K. Cheliotis & Sappho Xenakis (2021), "What's Left? Political Orientation, Economic Conditions and Incarceration in Greece under Syriza-Led Government", *European Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 18, no: 1, pp. 74-100; Yiannis Mylonas (2020), "Crisis, Authoritarian Neoliberalism, and the Return of 'New Democracy' to Power in Greece", *Stasis*, Vol. 10, no: 2, pp. 181-208.

politics and national interest, provides the most comprehensive framework for understanding the key drivers of the U.S.-Greece partnership in the current era.

Future research is crucial to understand how the interplay between these theoretical frameworks may shift as the regional security landscape evolves and new global challenges arise. Grasping the interaction of these forces will be essential for accurately gauging the future path of the U.S.-Greece alliance and its impact on regional and global stability. This analysis is indispensable in the dynamic field of International Relations, mainly because the U.S.-Greece alliance is pivotal in shaping the broader landscape of global stability.

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<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/menendez-rubio-introduce-us-greece-defense-and-interparliamentary-partnership-act-of-2021>.
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