

**A small actor within an institutionalized
group of states: Institutional-realism as a
framework of analysis.**

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1. Introduction

This paper will focus on the Greek stance during the crisis that occurred pre-Iraq war period in both NATO's and the EU's decision making framework. The division was characterized as the "old Europeans and *the new Europe*" within the EU and the "Atlanticists" against the "Franco-German axis" or "the 4" within NATO. The decision making process was tested in both of them.

As it is going to be shown the actor might follow an institutionalist-cooperative approach to achieve a positive sum (Koehane, 1984, Lake, 2001, Martin, 1992). But its core of strategic choices is based on a new type of realism which allows it to adapt to the requirements of each organizational or institutional framework in which it participates. The norms of the institutional environment and the leading countries in the institution are important parameters that the small actor has to take into account to make its choices in order to plan the strategy that will serve better its interest.

Before we go ahead on introducing a framework of analysis let's have a brief look on classic theories that explains the state behaviour within the institutional environment between realism and institutionalism.

Snyder recognizes that there are different categories of realism. He makes two major classifications "neorealism" which is seen as a major challenge to the classical realism and a more explicit classification which recognizes two varieties of "structural realism", three of "offensive realism" and several types of "defensive realism" (Snyder,2002:149-150)

Offensive realism: great powers maximize their relative power and become the hegemon in the system (Mearsheimer, 2001:20-21). Mearsheimer's argument seems to fit better in bigger states or in today's system in the superpower's model. Snyder highlights Mearsheimer's argument that states "*with the incentives and the capabilities*" would tend to use them. Offensive realism derives from an idealist argument that the lack of institutions which can extract power and form a structured hierarchy in the international system provides the incentives for states to maximize their power, because only power can guarantee their survival (Schroeder P., 1995, Mearsheimer, 2001).

A weak point in the substructure of this argumentation is that they are driven from historical paradigms and they fail to capture the new political formations, international organizations and institutions, which have an impact on the way, states pursue their interests. These new political formations have changed the nature of struggle of power in some occasions constraining the uncontrollable exercise of power of the superpower (Ikenberry, 2001). However this school highlights some interesting tactics such as "hiding", "transcendence", "specialization" for smaller actors' behaviour which can be observed in use even still in the contemporary era (Schroeder P., 1995).

On the other hand defensive realism, structural realism or neo-realism, as it has been called, attempts to explain the current structure of the world and recognizes the role of institutions as the exertion of power by bigger states (Waltz, 1979). For Snyder Waltz's theory of neorealism represents a characteristic case of defensive realism and that this type of realism argues that the primary objective of a state is to maintain its power and not to maximize its strength (Snyder, 2002:152). The binding hypothesis is also used by neo-realists who argue that "*weaker states "bind" themselves to the institutions because they achieve greater voice within it*" (Grieco, 1996). This concept explains adequately the behaviour of the middle and small scale states in regions of high institutionalization like Europe or where states have compatible regimes or common economic interests.

Another classification of realist theories is being made by Rosecrance who divides the theory between specific realism (Kaplan, 1984, Morgenthau, 1948, Waltz, 1979) and generalist realism (Axelrod, 1997, Powell, 1999). He claims that the former is based “*on conflict and material power capabilities conjoined with balancing of power*”. For the latter he points that it “*is a much broader and inclusive notion of realism that involves no necessary balance of power*” (Rosecrance 2001:135). Rosecrance goes on by observing that recent researches brought the generalist theory and the neo-liberal theory closer. He notices that Gruber’s “*empirical findings are like those of neoliberal institutionalist, while his explanations are entirely of a realist variety*” (Rosecrance 2001:138). Rosecrance points out that the main difference between generalists and neoliberal institutionalists is in the way they explain the strengthening of international organization. The latter theory argues that the states voluntarily join and cooperate within the institution while the generalist realist theory argues that “*bandwagoning*” explains better the joining of smaller states to institutions and their function (Rosecrance 2001:140-1, Gruber, 2000, Schweller R.L., 1994). Others realists argue that in the modern world political formations go beyond “*balancing*” and “*bandwagoning*” and there are more strategies such as “*bonding*”, “*beleaguering*”, “*binding*”, “*buffering*” in the new Unipolar world (Chong, 2003).

Institutionalists tend to agree more on the way international organizations function. Cooperation within an hierarchical framework of decision making brings gains to superpower, great power and small actors (Koehane, 1984, Lake, 2001, Martin, 1992). Another interesting point made by an institutionalist, Gourevitch is that “*...commitment to an institution requires a belief that it will bring benefits that outweigh the costs of membership*” (Gourevitch: Lake, Powell (eds), 1999:141). What it is interesting in Gourevitch's analysis is that he inserts the subjective perception of each actor's, and he argues that this perception plays a role to its behavior within every framework of an international organization. He implies that at the bottom line it is the actor's choice to commit on the organizational or institutional framework and this does not depend only on the independent variables of the international system. The dynamics and the perspectives that are developed within the actor are also important and affect its final choices. As Moravscik puts it the strategy of an actor is complex; “*societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences*” (Moravscik 1997: 513).

An explanation based mostly on practical experience comes from a high-ranking Greek diplomat in NATO. This view is closer to the offensive realist notion, since he claims that, in case of a small actor like Greece, if it had not joined institutions like the EU or NATO it would probably face the danger of losing parts of its territory. The membership in NATO and the EU might require giving away part of Greece's decision making power, but it guarantees the territorial integrity of Greece (Interviews, Source 1, 20/04/04).

As we have seen the different versions of realism and institutionalism intersect in different points. This study combines elements of the above notions to build an integrated framework of analysis in order to apply this to Greece's policy making in the pre-Iraq war period within NATO and the EU and analyze its choices. This framework will be named institutional-realism.

2. Definitions

Before I go on to set up the framework of institutional-realism I would like to define how I am going to use the terms international institution and international organization in my paper.

In order to define an international institution there are two main elements it should have; a) There should be a systematic, consistent and repetitive procedure of decision making based on an accorded set of rules which have been accepted by the parties constituting this organizational political network. b) The procedure of decision making should be in accordance with the International Law in order to make sure that its objectives and its tasks are not violating the rights of other actors.

On the other hand, international organizations are primarily political formations based on common interest. Their framework does not follow specific patterns of decision making process but allows the development of informal norms which is the heart of their decision making. Thus the decision making context is loose and promotes decision in the interest of strongest players. However some organizations have developed a semi-institutionalized decision making process meaning that in some

conditions they follow the procedure we described for defining international institutions but in some other occasions they have chosen to mobilise a looser framework for decision making. The latter one is the case of NATO and that is where the focus of my study concentrates.

3. Framework of analysis

Institutional-realism is a framework which sets up three fundamental variables for the analysis of international organizations and institutions. In order to apply institutional-realism as a framework of analysis to NATO, we need to study these three fundamental variables. They will give us accurate information about its structure (that is, whether it functions as an organization or an institution) and define its role on the international stage in particular time periods. 1) The objectives the members of the international organization or institution set up. 2) The decision making process for reaching the objectives and the norms which run it. 3) The actors which constitute the organization or institution, and the capabilities an actor possesses and its position on the international stage.

The same variables can be taken in consideration if we want to extend our research and examine the behaviour of a state within organizational or institutional frameworks. The element which should be added in the framework of analysis is the regional and political particularities of the actor is examined. Although the objectives for a small actor joining an organizational or institutional framework might be similar the political and historical context in which every actor was led to join and participate in the particular organizational or institutional framework is different. Furthermore their geographical location determines their perception on security¹. And this is the

¹ Holland, for example, cannot have the same perception of security issues as Greece. Holland is in a region where itself and the rest of the regional players enjoy high economic and trade development, and have a common history of domestic stability based on democratic and pluralistic patterns since 1945. All the above elements were lacking in the case of Greece and South-Eastern Europe. Greece changed her regional security perspectives only in the post-Cold War period and the prospect of the EU's financial integration altered the Greek perception of regional security (Tsakonas, 2003, Savvidis 2003, Pouli, Sasmatzoglou, 2000).

reason why small actors might choose to respond differently while they have the same opportunities and pressures, rights and obligations within the same organizational or institutional framework.

The institutional-realist framework of analysis helps us to identify the new flexible strategy Greece is following and to classify the different tactics which Greece is using in the different institutional or organizational frameworks. Furthermore institutional-realism is a useful pattern in seeking and identifying the reason the actor chooses a particular tactic at a particular time.

4. The Greek presidency on the Iraq issue.

The first response of the Greek government to try and manage the chasm which had begun building up between the “Atlanticists” and the “old Europeans” came on January the 17th 2004. The Greek Prime Minister Simitis had a joint meeting with the NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson and the EU High Representative of CFSP Javier Solana to discuss the issue of Iraq. PM Simitis stated for the need for a common stance for the EU members on the issue of Iraq.² There were already the first signs of divisions within NATO since the US was pushing for a number of requests to the European allies that would aid them to get prepared for the war on Iraq³. The US president George W. Bush and the Secretary of State Colin Powell had made obvious that the US would sooner or later, with or without a UN Resolution⁴. The EU High Representative of CFSP Javier Solana attempted to downplay the division between the two sides of the Atlantic and stressed the importance and the effectiveness of when the US and Europe take joint actions⁵. However this reconciliatory spirit did not avert the division and the clash of opinion within both NATO and the EU that was going to escalate in the next two months.

² Ta Nea, 17/01/2003.

³ See chapter 4 p.

⁴ Ta Nea 30/01/2003

⁵ Ta Nea 25/01/2003.

Greece was trying to keep a moderate line within the EU. The Greek officials were careful not to be critical towards the US in their statements over the superpower's position on going to war against Iraq sooner or later. However they were constantly stating on the need for giving time to the UN inspections to find if there were truly weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. This was consistent with the priorities the Greek presidency had put on foreign policy issues. The Greek Prime Minister argued that the Greek Presidency would work for a common EU foreign policy in EU. The objective was to leave the EU framework unharmed by the contest between the "Atlanticists" and the "old Europeans" and let it evolve within the UNSC. (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=122).

On the 10th January the Greek Prime Minister stated concerning the Iraq issue: *"I will be in contact with the (European) Prime Ministers of the countries that are members of the Security Council. The Greek government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is in contact with the other members of the European Union. We are currently exchanging views and our aim is to reach a common position. It is, still, too early to say when we will this common position and what will it be, since we are not, yet, aware of all the aspects of the problem.*

We are expecting the report of the Inspectors of the United Nations. We will take into consideration the reactions of our members and then, probably, we will achieve a common line. I can assure you, though, that from my contacts up to this moment, I presume that there will be no particular difficulties in agreeing on the issue."

And he continued: *"First, I would like to emphasise that we should not make assumptions for the future, without taking into consideration all the facts. As I said before, we are currently expecting the report from the UN inspectors regarding the demilitarization, the control of nuclear and biological weapons, etc.*

I would like to repeat the following: No one could prejudge today whether there would be a war or not. Our desire, intention and policy is that there should be no war. We don't want war. But there is a procedure that has been decided. The Security Council of the UN has set a range of conditions. There is a mission, which has been

sent to Iraq, to test whether these conditions are fulfilled and on the basis of the outcome of that work, decisions will be taken.

That is the procedure we will follow and we deem that the Security Council will have to deal with this, again, in due course, and decide what to do further with all that information at its disposal. At that stage, we can say this or the other thing should occur. Therefore, there will be a further process, which we hope will ensure peace, the removal or elimination of any weapons. But we must not prejudge that now. We simply have to stick to the procedure established and foreseen by the United Nations". (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=129).

The Greek presidency seemed to be achieving its aim and the first common statement of the "15" in accordance with the UN procedure came by the General Affairs Council on the 27th January 2003. The statement was making clear that *"the EU Council fully support the efforts of the UN to ensure full and immediate compliance by Iraq with all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular with UNRS 1441 of 8 November 2002"*. Further down it was stressing that *"the council expresses its appreciation for the work accomplished by the inspectors so far and reiterates its confidence and full support for Dr. Blix and Dr. El Baradei to complete their mission in accordance with UNRS 1441"* (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=167). This statement was nearer to the Franco-German position since it was supporting the UN procedure, which would not justify a war against Iraq unless there were a unanimous decision within the UNSC.

The Greek policy makers were aware of the limited capabilities Greece had for convincing the rest of the European partners for an integrated policy on Iraq, since they were divided. Thus they focused on agreeing on general and common perceptions and specifically in accordance with the UNRS. Although the Greek government was striving to find the lowest common denominator among the Europeans, it had from different directions the signals for the forthcoming division in the EU and NATO. On the 26th January the Greek Foreign Minister Papandreou had a short meeting with the US State Secretary Colin Powell. In the meeting Powell made clear that the US would go to war with Iraq and the only concession it could make to

the opposing countries was a delay of the offensive. The second signal the Greek government received came from the Spanish Prime Minister Maria Aznar who in a phone message that passed to the Greek Prime Minister Simitis had pointed out that the Paris and Berlin position did not represent the view of the “15” members of the EU⁶.

On January the 30th eight European states, five⁷ of them EU members, and three of them accession countries about to enter the EU⁸, proceeded in a public statement to strengthen the US position. The last three were also the newest NATO members, which had close relations with the US. The joint declaration was a hymn to the transatlantic bond and the role of the US in winning against the two totalitarian regimes, Nazism and Communism, and went on by stating that they would support the US in its new quest against Saddam’s regime and his weapons of mass destruction. The statement was referring in at least one paragraph to the fact that the signatories in their view felt they were representing Europe. Although they mentioned the need to go through the UN procedure, they implied that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that the UN inspectors had been deceived a number of times, and that meant that Saddam was defying the UN resolutions. *“Sadly this week the UN weapons inspectors have confirmed that his long-established pattern of deception, denial and non-compliance with UN Security Council resolutions is continuing”* (www.acronym.org.uk/docs/0301/doc25.htm). This would give the US-European coalition the right to go to war on Iraq.

The statement of the “8” alerted the Greek government to the effects that would have within the EU and Greece decided to take a diplomatic initiative and started a series of informal consultations with the rest of the European capitals to seek common ground. The release of the joint declaration by the “8” was viewed by the Greek policymakers as an act against the effort of the Greek presidency to obtain a common stance within the EU Council, and in a way it was prejudging the action of the UN Security Council.

⁶ Kathimerini 27/01/03.

⁷ The five EU Prime Ministers **who** signed the joint statement were: Jose Maria Aznar (Spain), Jose Manuel Durao Barroso (Portugal), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Tony Blair (United Kingdom), Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Denmark).

⁸ **For the accession countries, the signatories were:** Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic), Peter Medgyessy (Hungary), Leszek Miller (Poland).

According to a Greek foreign ministry's source the declaration of the "8" aimed to undermine the UN's procedure. It was an effort to show that not all European countries were following "the initiative of four" which seemed to represent the EU. The Greek government tried to identify the common ground and adopt a flexible position. The Greek government wanted to convey the message that the EU states could have different views, but the EU could not act outside the UN framework (source 6, 08/09/2004).

One day after the public release of the joint declaration on the 30th January, the Greek Prime Minister commented the action as follows: *"The way in which the 5 EU member states and the 3 candidate states' initiative on the Iraq issue was expressed does not contribute to a common stance towards this issue. The EU seeks to have a common foreign policy. Therefore, a common understanding is necessary on the Iraq issue, as was the case with the General Affairs Council on Monday the 27th of January 2003"* (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=176).

The Greek foreign Minister added to that and clarified further the Greek position; *"I would like to stress that the Greek Presidency has been working with the 15 Member States in order to shape a common stance within the framework of the conclusions of the EU General Affairs Council. This is now the framework within which we are working. The decision taken by the four members participating in the UN Security Council together with the EU Presidency regarding close cooperation and coordination was also a very important development. The way in which the joint declaration was made by the eight European leaders is first of all outside EU procedures. It is not an EU procedure and therefore may give rise to misinterpretations about whether Europe has a common stance or not.*

Therefore, I think it needs to be clarified that we all - that is, all the EU Member States - signed the statement of the '15', and I do not believe there is even one country which disagrees with the '15', with the common stance we adopted on Monday, which is moreover very specific. It speaks of the need for Iraq's total acceptance of and compliance with UN resolutions and particularly Resolution 1441, whilst expressing support for Dr. Hans Blix and Dr. ElBaradei. It also makes clear that the UN is the

organisation - the main, key-organisation - which will decide regarding any further developments on the issue of Iraq". (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=177).

On the 5th February the statement of the "10" Vilnius countries all of the them aspirants to join NATO and the EU went ahead on another statement supporting the US, claiming that Colin Powell "...had presented compelling evidence to the UNSC detailing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs and its active efforts to deceive the UN inspectors, and its links to international terrorism" (www.bulgaria-embassy.org/!/02052003-01.htm). This deepened the chasm in Europe and made more difficult the task of the Greek government because the tension and the pressure were increasing on every side and were toughening the rival positions.

On the 10th February the Greek Presidency announced a meeting of the EU Council to adopt a common stance on the Iraq issue. The Greek government took the initiative for the meeting in order to assess the situation on Iraq after the new UN inspectors' report on weapons of mass destruction, which would be publicized on the 14th February, for the Iraq issue and other issues of foreign policy. It was a last effort to synchronize the European countries to adopt a common stance on the Iraq issue according to the lowest common denominator (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=206).

A second Greek announcement stressed that the meeting would examine the situation based on the findings of Blix's second report and on the EU Council's decision on 27th January and UNRS 1441. (www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=209). This was a clear signal that the Greek Presidency would attempt to keep the "15" within the procedures of the EU and the UN and would not give room for unilateral manoeuvre in every state individually. The Greek Prime Minister, one day before the meeting, was stating diplomatically; *"In any case, the EU cannot have an overall plan for resolving the problem of Iraq, given that the UN Security Council is competent for the issue"*

(www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=222). This statement again is consistent with the initial principle the Greek government decided to take on the Iraq issue, that is to keep the tone muted in order not to deepen the crisis and to avoid any critical decision within the EU framework. Nevertheless the Greek initiative was hiding dangers for both Greece and the EU's credibility in case of failure.

This was interpreted as a move closer to the Franco-German position due to the fact that the EU as an actor could not adopt a position against the UN. Its structures and procedures were bound to the International Law and as long as there was a UN procedure continuing, the EU had to follow this procedure. Thus the move from the Greek presidency can be easily viewed as a move to exercise pressure on the "eight". However the counterargument is that the Greek government adopted this position only because it had no alternative. The Greek government did not represent Greek interests alone, but the EU's interests as well, and certainly the Greek government did not want a collapse of EU credibility during the Greek presidency. Thus the Greek government was forced to take the initiative based on the norms of the EU organization, according to which the decision making has to be in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. Unlike NATO, which is an intergovernmental organization based on the primary decision making of the alliance. And in the Alliance, the basic principles of decision making are power and solidarity.

The European Council summit took place on the 27th February and the EU members reached a common position on Iraq. They agreed that Iraq should complete an effective disarmament, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1441 and other resolutions. Furthermore, the 13 candidate countries concurred with the Council's conclusions. Prime Minister Simitis pointed out that the decision of the European Council highlighted two points: "*a) The EU, in the framework of the United Nations, is making every effort for peace, while at the same time war is not inevitable and b) all the Member States have the possibility of securing an important benefit for the EU, namely that "the members of the Union discuss, jointly shape views and aspire to a common stance"*

(www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=226, www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=167&article=272). However this result came only after intensive consultation with all the European capitals and the compromise from the Franco-German side that it would put in the phrase that the *“use of force would be acceptable, as a last resort, if Saddam would not comply with the UNRS”*.⁹

The Greek government got the credit from both sides, the “Atlanticists” and the “old Europeans”, for its initiative and its mild stance that helped lead to the formation of a common stance within the EU. Although neither side wanted to accept it in order not to spoil the concession, the final EU position was against the war. Essentially the announcement was transferring the responsibility for the decision to the UNSC, where France, Germany, and Russia were clearly against any new resolution unless there were evidence of weapons of mass destruction. The “Atlanticists” tried to extract some positive amendments to legitimize the forthcoming US offence but they only got away with a conditional reference to war *“in the case that there is proof that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction”*. The stance of the Greek presidency was catalytically to drive the EU in that direction.

5. The Greek position within NATO

As we have seen the Greek presidency within the EU was not favourable to the US intentions to go to an unconditional war on Iraq and set the preconditions for the EU to support and follow the UN resolutions. The concept was that the UN resolutions did not give the US a foothold to legitimize a war against Iraq. But how consistent was the Greek position with the stance Greece kept within the NAC?

The crisis in NATO, in the period December 2002 - February 2003, started after the US put forward a series of requests to the Allies that would help them with their military and political preparation for the prospective war against Iraq. However the

⁹ Ta Nea, 18/02/2003.

point to which the “4” disagreeing countries¹⁰ objected was the insistence of the Atlanticists on deploying military equipment in Turkey, before any UN consultation, and before a UN decision had been taken about whether a war against Iraq would be legitimate or not. The refusal of the Franco-German axis to concede to the US requests led to the blocking of the NAC.

When the US announced its requests for this deployment within NATO and started a round of preliminary talks at a bilateral level with the rest of the allied delegations to assess their intentions, the Greek delegations just kept a reserved and cautious stance. The Greek delegation disagreed with some of the US requests and the way they were put forward.

The main issue that troubled the Greek delegation and the Greek foreign Ministry was the US demand to pull out the troops from the Balkan operations. Greece always perceived the presence of the US troops as a factor of stability for the region and the Greek government on many occasions stated its concern about the possible withdrawal of the US troops from Kosovo. The US was aiming to disengage from the Balkans since there was no clear US interest and the cost was high. The Greek officials stated these concerns but they did not want to adopt a stance that would add to the transatlantic rift, and they were hoping that even the Franco-German axis would adopt a more compromising position. The US involvement in the Balkans and maintaining good relations with Turkey was more important for Greek interests than joining the opposition of the “4” within NATO. This calculation proves the realist view of Greece in the US plan on Iraq.

The US, in the context of the preparations for the war against Iraq, asked the Greek government for a pack of facilities that would help the US army to advance its operational readiness and as we will see the Greek leadership responded positively to these requests. The requests went through informal consultations between the US and the Greek delegation in NATO, and through bilateral channels.

¹⁰ France, Germany, Luxemburg and Belgium.

The US ambassador in Greece, Tom Miller, in an interview on the 4th January stated that *“the communication and the cooperation between the Greek and the US leadership is excellent. The communication is really important on an issue as difficult as Iraq. We are sure that the period of the Greek presidency in the EU would be the appropriate to develop good and effective contacts, since Europeans and Americans want the same outcome and have the same objectives”*¹¹. In the meantime the US was working through the NATO framework and at a bilateral level to build a political and military coalition that would provide political legitimacy and military support.

Preliminary and unofficial talks took place between the US official and the rest of the delegations to sound out the intentions of the rest of the NATO members. At this stage according to the Greek sources in NATO many of the Allies were uneasy on the way the request was put forward. In particular at the end of January Greece was “not ready to concede to the US proposal” (Source 3, 21/04/04). Since the issue had not yet reached the NAC, the Greek position was not very clear and Greece chose to keep a reserved stance and leave the initiative to other countries like France and Belgium that had already openly stated their opposition. Greece was not in favour of actions that would reinforce the climate of war against Iraq, but it preferred to “hide” this view within the NATO framework.

However the Greek government had responded positively to the US-NATO requests for contributing forces for the naval patrols in the east Mediterranean Sea. The Greek Ministry of Defence announced that would provide five military ships for the naval patrols which would cost up to 150.000 euros per day for the Greek state¹².

Based on the bilateral agreement signed in the past with the US the Greek government gave permission for unlimited flights of spy and military US aircraft, in and off the US base in Suda-Crete (Source 6, 04/09/04). In the base would arrive in the next few days many battle-ships and the aircraft “Harry Truman” in order to start preparations for the invasion on Iraq.

¹¹ Ta Nea, 04/01/2003

¹² Ta Nea 07/01/2003.

Furthermore after a “non-paper” request by the US government, the Greek government decided to increase the security measures around Suda by activating the S-300 and “Vello” anti-air missile systems. In the next days it was planned to fortify the anti-ballistic shield air defence by using the “Patriots” and the “PAC-3” anti-missile systems¹³.

The US pressed more the Greek government to contribute to the coalition prepared to undertake action in Iraq. However Foreign Minister George Papandreou stated that the Greek participation would be limited on facilitating the US forces according to the bilateral agreements already signed by the two countries. Greece would provide the national airspace for the US flights and supportive forces in the perimeter of the naval patrols, provided that there would be no threat for the Greek personnel¹⁴.

Furthermore, one of the frigates provided to NATO’s patrol force advanced into the Arabic Sea. In a later interview the Minister of Defence Papantoniou commented that it was clear that Greece would not participate in any military operation of the US coalition and that the frigate would stop patrolling in the Arabic Sea if it were to be characterized as a “war zone” after the outbreak of war against Iraq¹⁵.

The US request to Greece included also the deployment of “Apache”¹⁶ helicopters and “Patriot” defence missile system in South-Eastern Turkey. The Greek Defence Minister Papantoniou replied that “*Greece would provide military aid to any NATO country only after an invocation of article 5*”¹⁷, meaning that since Turkey invoked only article 4 Greece would not provide any assets to Turkey.¹⁸ However knowing that countries like Germany and France, the main opposition to the US requests, had stated that they were ready to commit military equipment and personnel to Turkey’s defence, but only at a later time, it is easy for an observer to conclude that there are other reasons leading the Greek government to this direction¹⁹.

¹³ Ta Nea, 07/01/2003.

¹⁴ Ta Nea, 30/01/2003.

¹⁵ Ta Nea, 10/02/2003.

¹⁶ Greece and the US were the only NATO countries that had the “Apache” helicopters which are considered the highest developed military helicopter in the world at the current time.

¹⁷ www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm

¹⁸ Ta Nea, 10/02/2003.

¹⁹ The Greek government could not choose to deploy the military equipment that had been bought to protect Greece from Turkey, for protecting Turkey. This would have meant a collapse of the Greek

On the 10th February, the crisis within NATO reached its highest peak, but Greece failed to sideline the Franco-German axis within NATO's intergovernmental process. The opposition of the 4 members who disagreed with the Turkish request had to do with the way the US was pushing the whole issue. France, Germany, Belgium and Luxemburg did not want any NATO involvement without a previous decision from the UN that would verify the existence of weapons of mass destructions in Iraq.

The Greek position in the informal consultation was that the issue should be examined thoroughly; meaning a detailed examination of the advantages and the disadvantages if the decision for Turkey's defence was to be taken. In fact this is another proof that the Greek government preferred to "hide" its real intention because there was no reason for Greece to position herself positively or negatively with regard to the particular request. For three reasons:

First there was an informal Greek objection to the way the request was put forward when the US request was first made, in January. The Greek delegation made clear that it was not willing to block the decision, but that every measure should be taken in accordance with NATO's constitutional procedure. Meaning that an informal request from the US was not enough, but that there should be a formal invocation of article 4 by Turkey, which was the concerned country. Greece disagreed with the procedure of circumventing the NAC and asked for more time in order for the NATO members to consult on the issue (Source 1, 20/04/04, source 6, 21/04/04).

Second was the reason of the Greek presidency. The Greek government did not want to line up along with the "four". The message the Greek officials tried to convey to their EU partners was that "*we are interested in your initiative, we do not condemn them, but we can and will examine it only after the end of our presidency*" (source 6, 03/09/04).

Third, the fact that Turkey was the country officially requesting NATO's aid was important. Greece did not want to adopt a policy that could have been characterized

strategic concept concerning the threat from the East and would have undermined the government's position.

as anti-Turkish. So Greece aimed to keep a neutral stance. However Mr Kintis admitted that whichever state instead of Turkey would invoke article 4 in the particular situation, Greece would not pose a veto on the decision about its defence. The explanation the Greek officials gave was that it is a fundamental principle of Greek foreign policy to respect the norms and the values of the organizations in which Greece participates (Source 1, 20/04/04, Source 3, 21/04/04, Source 6 03/09/04, Source 7, 05/09/04).

The basic argument for Greece not joining the Franco-German bloc within NATO was not negative with regard to NATO undertaking defensive measures for the protection of Turkey on the prospect of an Iraqi attack. For the two Greek officials from within the Greek delegation in NATO and the Greek foreign ministry, the concession to Turkey's invocation of article 4 was a matter of allied solidarity "silence". It was an issue of NATO's principle and one of the basic norms that run the Alliance (Source 1, 20/04/04, source 6, 21/04/04).

Yet after the Turkish request reached the NAC, the Greek delegation took an official stance and decided to keep the silence (source 3, 21/04/2004). The final Greek position was formed only when the Greek representative was informed that the issue would go to the NAC. A high-ranking official from the Greek delegation noted that if Greece had sided with the French-German axis, Greece would have paid political costs, not only to the US and Britain, as German and France did in the aftermath of the crisis, but to Turkey as well (source 1, 20/04/2004).

The Greek stance within NATO was completely contradictory to the one within the EU. The Greek government was aware that the positive response to the Turkish invocation of article 4 was going to be regarded as an acceptance and legitimization of the US intentions to go to war by the NAC, since Turkey would be under threat only after a US invasion in Iraq. Although in the EU Greece did everything in its power to stop any decision or action that would indicate or legitimize war, within NATO Greece failed to raise any objection to the forthcoming war.

The Greek government views the triangle US-Britain-Turkey as an important parameter of its security interests. Britain is always playing an important role as a

mediator in the Cyprus issue and the US usually works as the “fireman” in the contentions between Greece and Turkey. The Greek line, especially after the about-turn in 1995-96 (Couloumbis, Dalis, 1997, Kranidiotis, 2000), is to be more muted in its tone and to win over the Anglo-Saxon allies by going along with their security policies to a certain extent and by becoming more moderate in its stance towards Turkey. The Greek officials were aware that taking a tough stance within NATO, which is dominated by the Anglo-Saxon states, in an issue that involves Turkey, would have a direct impact on Greece's national interests. Thus Greece was very cautious to avoid putting any impediments to US policies within the Alliance. It preferred discrete statements which did not interfere with the essence of the decision.

When I had the opportunity to interview Greek officials, they avoided giving a direct answer whether Greece by keeping silence was supporting US interests. Certainly the fundamental norm that rules all alliances, and in the bottom line NATO is an alliance, is solidarity. In occasions of threat it is important for NATO's credibility that the rest of the members support and protect the member which is under potential threat. Nevertheless, in the particular case, the request for enhancing Turkey's request was a political move pursued by the US to promote their interests on the international scene. It did not have any practical reasons, since there was no real threat for Turkey unless the US were to invade Iraq, and because Turkey was more than capable of defending itself against Iraq. The measures which were about to be taken after the invocation of article 4 served the US's interests and not directly NATO's.

However the argument that Greece was trying to keep a neutral position, which most of the interviewees adopted ((Source 1, 20/04/04, source 3, 21/04/04, source 6, 21/04/04), is not completely accurate because by keeping silence Greece indirectly accepted the “Atlanticists” position. This is due to the consensus building process, according to which, if a member does not state its objection, it is as if it agrees with the proposal put on the table. The generalist or defensive realist would interpret Greece's position as “wait” and “hide” policy. For the specific offensive realist, Greece had backed down in the prospect of coercion by the US. The institutionalists would argue that Greece chose to implement the particular policy in accordance with NATO's norms which promote solidarity and cooperation. Yet whichever of the interpretations we choose, the small actors avoid blocking the decision-making in

NATO in order not to face sanctions on other issues by the US, who is usually the major player for policy recommendation and implementation within the organization.

The essence was that this tactic was a political manoeuvre of a broader overall strategy which began evolving in Greece's behaviour since the end of Cold War with NATO's transformation. As NATO broadened up, more complicated issues were brought to the Alliance's table, than just how to defend against a specific threat. This pushed smaller actors, like Greece in the particular position, to adopt more complex policies to respond to the new needs of NATO's decision making.

6. The Greek position on the use of the DPC as NATO's main body of decision making

As we saw the US decided through the Secretary General to push the decision making away from the NAC and into the DPC, in order to marginalize France. Greece was not positive with regard to the activation of the DPC for taking the final decision over such an important issue. However the costs to Greece – to face the US, Britain and Turkey in return for supporting French interests, without getting anything back for this support – were too great. (Source 1, 20/04/04).

According to Greek officials the activation of the DPC as a decision making instrument, in this particular case, came as an acceptable compromise from both the US and France. Third countries, like Greece, do not have reasons for rejecting the implementation of this decision-making process. The French absence from NATO's military structure is a French decision, which serves the political interests of both France and the US. Thus, according to a Foreign Ministry source, the Greek position on the activation of the DPC as NATO's decision-making body is sceptical, and Greece is not in favour of the use of such a process on regular basis (source 6, 16/06/04).

Assuming that the NAC is the supreme decision making body within NATO, and that it is intended to take the important, if not all, decisions for the Alliance, then the

current case is to be problematic for NATO's decision making system. The norms running the Alliance and the constitution that runs NATO as an organization does not equate the DPC with the NAC (NATO Handbook, www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb070101.htm, North Atlantic Treaty article 9, www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb070101.htm).

So not only the function of NATO's intergovernmental process is elliptic, from an institutional point of view, but also the stance of a small actor like Greece proves that the members do not see NATO as an institution which guarantees benefits from implementing cooperative policies. In the current case Greece chooses to cooperate and adapt to what is perceived to be an institutionalist policy, because this is the best for its interest. This can be discerned by the emphasis which the Greek officials gave, not to whether the process is normal or whether it creates problems in NATO's decision making process, but to Greece's primary concern as to whether this process affects Greek interests. There is no consideration from Greece with regard to intervening or tackling whether the decision making process is problematic, because such an action in itself might be taken as hostile by some countries, and Greece might face "sanctions" on issues which are perceived as more important for its national interests.

NATO's organizational structure and its decision making model does informally specify and narrow down the context in which smaller actors can move. We can say that the organizational structure channels the way the small actor can pursue its interests. NATO is an organization with procedures of decision making that are not clear, systematic, consistent and repetitive, but rather are dependent on US capabilities. Meaning that if the small actor exceeds the imaginary boundary set by NATO's organizational framework that actor will face "sanctions" by the US. These "sanctions" might be relevant to NATO issues or not. Yet they would definitely be relevant to the small actor's interests.

The four countries which disagreed to the US request had different reactions. Germany was the first to withdraw its veto. Luxemburg followed before the issue went to the DPC, and at the final stage were left France and Belgium. France did not concede, thus the Secretary General put forward the issue of the DPC. Last remained

the opposition by Belgium, which was put under tremendous pressure by the US and the Secretary General. Most analysts estimated that Belgium made a stand because in the period of the crisis the country was in a pre-election period and the Belgian Prime Minister adopted this stance for attracting voters. Yet the pressure by the Secretary General on Belgium was stifling (Source 3, 21/04/04). Belgium eventually backed down and the US requests were unanimously approved by the DPC.

The activation of the DPC was an action to isolate France, but the decision for the activation came after bilateral consultation between the US and France. France was aware that the issue would pass to the DPC and seemed to agree to that. It was convenient for France, since it would not continue blocking NATO's decision and at the same time it was avoiding the US pressure by making its political stand.

The dilemma that most states were put in was that of choosing either France's isolation by mobilizing the DPC or the marginalization of NATO's role on the international scene. The view of the Greek policy makers is that the more decisive the international organization, the more power and prestige its members gain on the international scene. The US was ready to proceed on Turkey's defence with or without NATO and as a result the Alliance would not have any role in Iraq. There was no question of NATO's engagement in Iraq due to the disagreement of most of NATO members. Thus the concession to the measures for Turkey's defence, by Greece and the rest NATO members, was perceived as the less costly solution for NATO's credibility. If NATO would not respond positively to Turkey's request NATO's purpose would be questioned seriously (Source 6, 03/09/04).

Yet the above analysis is based on the assumption that the issue of the US prospective attack on Iraq was irrelevant to Turkey's defence, though this is not the case. The discussion was avoided within the NAC in order not to create more problems in the Alliance. France actually exploited that fact to avoid any more pressure from the Americans, by threatening them that if they continued to pressure France to withdraw its veto, it would bring the issue²⁰ to the NAC (Source 1, 20/04/04). Another NATO

²⁰ The French claimed that France would ask within the NAC who is responsible for the Iraq threat and would probably accuse the US for that. Bringing such an issue so openly in the NAC would cause big problems in NATO, something that neither wanted to.

official made clear that is for the interest of the Alliance to have a Secretary General who is aware of the position of every member and can lead NATO's decision-making mechanism to well-made compromises (Source 2, 21/04/04).

7. Inconsistent policy making?

Most interesting is the strategy Greece implemented within the two institutions. Though it seems Greece chose to follow different policies within NATO and within the EU, this is not the case. Since the two organizations have different aims, Greece adapted its policy making to the requirements of the institutional context and chose not to object to the policies of the leading states. The Greek Foreign Ministry official pointed out that both organizations have different ways of managing crises but also they possess different places in the international system. Thus there is no contradiction for Greece in adopting different ways to implement her strategy within NATO and the EU (Source 6, 03/09/04).

Greece at the time the crisis began within NATO was holding the EU presidency and, as the debate about the Iraq issue was spreading to all the regional and international organizations, the issue was certain to spill over. A high-ranking official of the Greek delegation said that he was not familiar with the exact statements of the Greek presidency on the Iraq issue and would not like to comment on them (Source 1, 20/04/04). This statement proves either a gap in coordination and communication of Greek foreign policy on issues that involve the same issue in different institutional contexts, or more likely it shows the unwillingness to comment on what it seems to be a contradiction in the Greek policy within the two institutions.

This apparent inconsistency of Greek foreign policy derives from the different positioning of the Greek government within the two international organizations. Yet Greece, as we said did not intend to interfere in the pre-Iraq discussion within the EU and tried to keep the tone as muted as it could. It did not take any preliminary action and its initiative came only after the joint declaration of the "8" and under the pressure of the events. So when Greece's and the EU's credibility was at stake from

the non-institutionalized interference and statements of the Atlanticists, Greece took the initiative to defend its own and the EU's prestige.

In NATO Greece tried to follow similar tactics of non-interference by conceding to the US demands. It offered facilities for the US military preparations against Iraq and helped by keeping silence within NATO's intergovernmental process. Yet even within NATO's framework Greece failed to comply totally with the US requests.

In the case of defending Turkey by using NATO assets, Greece was asked to contribute patriot antimissiles defence systems and "Apaches" and Greece is one of the few states in the world that has "Apaches". Yet the Greek government bought "Apaches" first for using for national purpose²¹ and then for using for NATO (Source 6, 03/09/04). In the particular case there is obvious predominance of the national objective compared to the institutional one. The Greek government perceived as an oxymoron the use of Greek assets to protect Turkey since actually those assets were purchased to deter the Turkish threat.

6. Conclusion

According to the institutional-realism framework we set up in the introduction we can conclude the following for the role of Greece in the pre-Iraq war period within the NATO and the EU.

1. NATO's objective is to deal with security issues and the Greek leadership adopted this perspective in conceding to the Turkish request for invoking article 4. Since Turkey requested allied help, Greece felt responsible at least not to block this policy because it would undermine one of NATO's fundamental principles, which is NATO's solidarity. The Greek government did not link the Turkish or the US requests with the prospective war on Iraq. This apparently naïve stance was deliberate in order avoid clashing first with US interests and second with Turkish.

²¹ The Greek strategic concept is to modernize constantly its capabilities in order to overcome the Turkish numerical preponderance.

This can be concluded from the different Greek stance in the EU. As a president Greece tried to link the EU's policy on the Iraq issue with the UN Council. The Greek government sought a formula that all the EU members would agree to, that would restore the EU's credibility, and that had a common voice, and that is why it pushed for close attachment to the International Law.

2. The Greek policy makers are aware that the process of decision making in NATO is fuelled primarily by the US. The majority of policy recommendations which are pushed through the committees to the NATO council are in accordance with the US interests for the simple reason that the US is the major contributor by far. The persistence of the US on such an important issue persuaded the Greek leadership to join the Franco-German axis.

Within the EU the Greek policy was different. Since the normative line for the EU is to follow the UNRS, it was easy for Greece to find the lowest common denominator among the EU members, because no state could refuse to support them. It is obvious that small states can express their opinion within the EU since there is a clear procedure of decision making attached to the International Law and there is no superpower within it.

3. Greece seems to be adapting in the post-Cold War NATO organizational framework. There is an about-turn on supporting silently but practically the US policies within and off NATO's institutional aiming to serve its own interests. This strategy is being carried out as discretely as possible so as not to alarm the Greek public because it will have significant political cost for the government.

The lack of any single major player in the EU intergovernmental process and the attachment of the EU's foreign policy to the International Law give the Greek government more room to express its individuality. Thus Greece like more of the small actors is against any military intervention outside the concept of International Law, which is only for self-defence.

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