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## " NATO Intelligence and Greek Military Strategy: Past, Present, and Future Developments in European Security"

**Dr. Marios Kyriakidis**

Docent at the Hellenic Army Academy Higher Military Educational Institution, "Military Academy of Evelpidon"

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**\*Corresponding author:** Dr. Marios Kyriakidis

Docent at the Hellenic Army Academy Higher Military Educational Institution, "Military Academy of Evelpidon"

### Abstract

*Greece's military intelligence has played a crucial yet often overlooked role within NATO's strategic framework. As a NATO member since 1952, Greece has navigated complex geopolitical challenges while integrating into the alliance's evolving intelligence structures. This study examines the historical evolution, contemporary significance, and future trajectory of NATO intelligence and Greek military strategy, analyzing Greece's intelligence contributions in Cold War operations, post-9/11 counterterrorism efforts, and modern cybersecurity threats. The research also explores Greece's dual role within NATO and the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), highlighting the intelligence-sharing dilemmas between the two institutions.*

*By assessing key intelligence operations - ranging from Cold War counterintelligence efforts to NATO's recent intelligence fusion strategies - this study investigates Greece's role in regional security, countering Russian influence in the Balkans, managing Turkish tensions, and participating in NATO-led intelligence missions. The research further examines Greece's contributions to NATO cyber defense initiatives and the growing importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in modern intelligence warfare.*

*Using a multidisciplinary approach that includes historical analysis, security studies, and intelligence theory, this study provides a prototype-level examination of Greece's position in NATO intelligence. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how Greece navigates intelligence-sharing complexities, geopolitical constraints, and emerging security threats within NATO and the EU. The study concludes with policy recommendations on strengthening Greece's intelligence infrastructure and its strategic alignment in European security.*

**Keywords:** NATO Intelligence, Greek Military Strategy, European Security, Intelligence Sharing, Cyber Warfare

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Defining the Scope of the Research

This study examines the evolution and current dynamics of Greek military strategy within the intelligence structures of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since its accession to NATO in 1952, Greece has played a pivotal role in the alliance's southeastern flank, contributing significantly to collective defense and intelligence operations. The research focuses on Greece's integration into NATO's intelligence framework, its strategic military planning, and its participation in security operations. Special attention is given to Greece's geopolitical position, which necessitates a nuanced approach to balancing national security interests with alliance commitments.

The primary objectives of this study are to:

- Analyze the historical development of Greek military intelligence within NATO.
- Evaluate Greece's contributions to NATO's strategic intelligence-sharing mechanisms.
- Examine the interplay between NATO, the European Union (EU), and Greek security policies.
- Identify future challenges and opportunities for Greek military intelligence within the evolving European security landscape.

From this point of view the central research questions guiding this inquiry are:

- How has Greek military intelligence evolved within NATO since 1952?
- What are the main structural and operational challenges in Greece's intelligence integration with NATO and the EU?
- What role does Greece play in NATO intelligence in contemporary conflict zones such as Ukraine and the Balkans?
- How can Greece adapt to emerging intelligence threats, such as cyber warfare and AI-driven operations?

By addressing these objectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Greece's role within NATO's intelligence structures and its impact on regional and European security.

## 1.2 Importance of NATO Intelligence in European Security

NATO's intelligence apparatus is fundamental to the security architecture of Europe, facilitating the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information critical to the alliance's collective defense strategy. Intelligence-sharing among member states enables NATO to detect, assess, and respond to a spectrum of threats, ranging from conventional military engagements to asymmetric challenges such as terrorism and cyber warfare.

Greece's participation in NATO's intelligence framework is particularly significant due to several factors:

**Strategic Geographical Location:** Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Greece serves as a vital observation point for monitoring developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Middle East. This positioning allows Greece to provide NATO with valuable intelligence on regional security dynamics.

**Regional Security Challenges:** Greece faces ongoing security concerns, including territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea and complex relations with neighboring countries. Its active engagement in NATO's intelligence-sharing mechanisms enhances the alliance's situational awareness and contributes to regional stability.

**Counterterrorism and Migration Monitoring:** Greece's proximity to regions experiencing conflict and instability positions it as a key player in monitoring migration flows and potential terrorist activities, thereby supporting NATO's broader security objectives.

Through its involvement in NATO's intelligence operations, Greece not only addresses its national security imperatives but also reinforces the collective security of the alliance, demonstrating the integral role of intelligence cooperation in maintaining European stability.

## 1.3 Historical Context: Greece's Military Evolution Since Joining NATO (1952–Present). Early Integration and Cold War Period (1952–1991)

Greece's accession to NATO in 1952 marked the beginning of a transformative period for its military and intelligence services. During the Cold War, Greece aligned its defense policies with NATO's strategic objectives, focusing on countering the influence of the Soviet Union in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Key developments during this period include:

**Military Modernization:** NATO membership facilitated the modernization of the Hellenic Armed Forces, incorporating advanced weaponry and adopting standardized operational procedures in line with alliance standards.

**Intelligence Collaboration:** Greece contributed to NATO's collective intelligence efforts by monitoring Soviet activities in the region and participating in joint exercises aimed at enhancing readiness and interoperability among member states.

**Political Turbulence:** Internal political challenges, such as the military junta from 1967 to 1974, impacted Greece's relations within NATO (Kyriakidis, 2025a). Despite these challenges, Greece maintained its commitment to the alliance, recognizing the strategic benefits of collective defense.

### 1.3.1 Post-Cold War Adjustments and Regional Engagements (1991–2000s)

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent geopolitical shifts prompted NATO to redefine its strategic focus. Greece adapted to these changes by:

**Participating in Peacekeeping Operations:** Greek forces engaged in NATO-led missions in the Balkans, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, contributing to regional stability and demonstrating Greece's commitment to collective security efforts.

**Enhancing Intelligence Capabilities:** Recognizing the evolving nature of security threats, Greece invested in improving its intelligence infrastructure, focusing on areas such as counterterrorism and the monitoring of illicit trafficking networks (Kyriakidis, 2025b).

### 1.3.2 Contemporary Developments and Future Outlook (2000s–Present)

In the 21st century, Greece continues to play a crucial role within NATO, adapting to new security challenges through:

Counterterrorism Initiatives: Greece collaborates with NATO partners to address terrorism threats, sharing intelligence and participating in joint operations aimed at preventing and responding to terrorist activities.

Cybersecurity Efforts: Acknowledging the growing significance of cyber threats, Greece contributes to NATO's cybersecurity initiatives, working to protect critical infrastructure and information systems from cyber-attacks.

Defense Modernization: Greece has embarked on a comprehensive defense modernization program, planning to allocate over €25 billion for arms procurement by 2036. This initiative includes acquiring new submarines, drones, satellites, and fighter jets, reflecting Greece's commitment to enhancing its military capabilities within the NATO framework.

These developments underscore Greece's ongoing dedication to NATO's mission and its proactive approach to addressing both traditional and emerging security challenges.

#### **1.4 Interplay Between NATO, the EU, and Greek Security Interests**

Greece's security policy operates at the intersection of its commitments to NATO and its membership in the European Union (EU). This dual affiliation presents both opportunities and challenges in harmonizing defense strategies and intelligence-sharing practices.

NATO and EU Security Frameworks: While NATO focuses on collective defense and military operations, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) emphasizes crisis management, conflict prevention, and strengthening international security. Greece actively participates in both frameworks, contributing to various missions and operations under each organization.

##### **1.4.1 Balancing Commitments**

Navigating the demands of both NATO and the EU requires Greece to:

Align Strategic Objectives: Ensure that national defense policies are coherent with the strategic goals of both organizations, leveraging the strengths of each to enhance national and regional security.

Optimize Resource Allocation: Effectively distribute military and intelligence resources to fulfill obligations to both NATO and EU missions without overextending capabilities.

Facilitate Intelligence Sharing: Promote interoperability and information exchange between NATO and EU intelligence structures to address common security threats.

This balancing act necessitates a nuanced approach to policy-making, ensuring that Greece can meet its commitments while safeguarding national interests.

#### **1.5 Research Methodology**

This study employs a multi-faceted research methodology to provide a comprehensive analysis of Greek military strategy within NATO intelligence structures.

The research methodology was determined based on the nature of the subject matter and the overarching objectives of the study: to analyze the historical trajectory, structural evolution, and contemporary challenges of Greek military intelligence within the NATO framework and its interplay with European strategic

autonomy. As such, the study adopts the historical-qualitative method, combined with archival analysis and documentary interpretation.

In the field of historical-political-military studies, historical research spans a wide domain, including:

- a) the development of military institutions and national defense policy;
- b) the transformation of intelligence doctrines across time;
- c) operational responses to regional and global conflicts, including Cold War-era intelligence sharing and post-9/11 adaptations;
- d) critical evaluations of decision-making mechanisms within alliances;
- e) strategic policy shifts resulting from conflicts such as the Cyprus Crisis (1974), Balkan Wars (1990s), and the Russia-Ukraine War. (Borg & Gall, 1989).

This research is qualitative and focuses on historical-political reconstructions, specifically the evolution of Greek military intelligence from its integration into NATO in 1952 to its contemporary cyber-intelligence contributions. It explores key inflection points — such as Greece's intelligence role during the Cold War, the Military Junta (1967–1974), post-junta realignment, intelligence failures during the Cyprus conflict, NATO intelligence restructuring post-9/11, and modern AI-cyber warfare integration. Through the analysis of official NATO records, Greek defense white papers, and EU intelligence cooperation reports, it critically reconstructs institutional responses to strategic challenges.

According to D. Mavroskoufis' definition, primary or direct sources "are those that come from a specific period of the past, contemporary with the one the historian is studying," while secondary or indirect sources "are the later interpretations" (Mavroskoufis, 2005). This research draws from both — using declassified NATO documents, Greek parliamentary defense reports, and historical treaties, supplemented by analytical works from scholars and strategic think tanks.

It is a complex methodological undertaking, due to the limited availability and fragmented nature of military-intelligence records (Verdi, 2015). The older the events, the greater the difficulty in securing verified data, as Athanasiou notes (Athanasiou, 2003). The aim is not only to trace military-institutional developments but to situate them within their historical, geopolitical, and educational-pedagogical contexts, providing insight into how intelligence evolved as both a strategic tool and an ideological construct.

As Jaspers observed, modern science continuously redefines itself through inquiry (Jaspers, 1950). The same applies to this study, which does not merely document events but interrogates their significance, consequences, and symbolic resonance. Historical analysis — defined as "the systematic and objective identification, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence" (Cohen & Manion, 2018) — underpins this methodology. It allows for the examination of cause-effect dynamics, institutional actors, and strategic recalibrations within both NATO and Greek national frameworks.

This methodology clarifies how military education, intelligence culture, and state strategy interact and evolve. As Topolski argues, historical research contributes to "clarifying concepts, ensuring coherence in policy, and evaluating institutional aims" (Topolski, 1983). Ultimately, the methodology supports a broader goal:



understanding the deep structures behind Greek-NATO intelligence evolution and contributing to future strategic thinking.

### 1.5.1 Historical-Document Analysis. Case Studies

A thorough examination of historical documents, treaties, and official records will trace the evolution of Greece's military strategy and intelligence integration within NATO since 1952.

The research includes detailed case studies of pivotal events, such as:

**Cold War Dynamics:** Analyzing Greece's role in NATO's strategies during the Cold War era.

**Balkan Conflicts:** Assessing Greece's involvement in intelligence operations during the Balkan crises.

**Modern Cyber Warfare:** Exploring Greece's strategies to counter cyber threats within the NATO framework.

Applying established theories in intelligence and security studies will provide a conceptual framework for understanding Greece's strategic decisions and intelligence practices within NATO.

### 1.5.2 Identifying Research Gaps and Originality

Despite extensive literature on NATO and European security, specific studies focusing on Greece's integration into NATO's intelligence structures remain limited. This research aims to fill this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of:

**Greece's Unique Geopolitical Role:** Investigating how Greece's geographic position influences its intelligence contributions to NATO.

**Evolution of Intelligence Practices:** Tracing the development of Greek military intelligence within the alliance over the decades.

**Contemporary Challenges:** Examining current security threats and Greece's strategies to address them within NATO's intelligence framework.

By addressing these areas, the study provides original insights into the complexities of intelligence cooperation and strategic planning within NATO, highlighting Greece's pivotal role in European security.

## 2 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Historical Evolution of Greek Military Intelligence in NATO

#### Greece's Entry into NATO (1952) and Its Initial Intelligence Role

Greece's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on February 18, 1952, marked a pivotal moment in its post-World War II foreign policy, aligning the nation with Western powers during the nascent stages of the Cold War (van Dijk & Sloan, 2020). This strategic move was driven by multiple factors, including the desire for security guarantees against potential aggression from neighboring countries and the broader Soviet threat (Moustakis & Sheehan, 2000).

Membership in NATO not only integrated Greece into a collective defense system but also necessitated the development and enhancement of its military intelligence capabilities to meet alliance standards.

Upon joining NATO, Greece was required to align its military and intelligence operations with those of other member states. This integration involved adopting standardized procedures,

participating in joint exercises, and sharing intelligence pertinent to regional security concerns. The Hellenic National Defense General Staff (GEETHA) played a central role in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that Greek military intelligence contributed effectively to NATO's collective security objectives. It also provided crucial assessments to NATO on Yugoslavia's shifting allegiances during the 1950s (Chourchoulis & Kourkouvelas, 2017).

From the outset, Greece's role in NATO intelligence was primarily focused on counter-Soviet surveillance, particularly monitoring naval and aerial movements in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greek intelligence worked closely with NATO's Allied Command Europe (ACE), providing human intelligence (HUMINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) through cooperation with American and British agencies.

The initial phase of Greece's NATO membership saw a focus on building the infrastructure necessary for intelligence gathering and dissemination. This period involved training personnel, establishing communication channels with other NATO intelligence agencies, and developing protocols for information sharing. The emphasis was on creating a robust system capable of providing timely and accurate intelligence to support both national defense and alliance-wide operations.

### 2.2 Cold War Period: Intelligence Sharing, Counter-Soviet Activities, and Regional Security

During the Cold War, Greece's strategic location in the southeastern flank of NATO rendered it a critical player in monitoring and countering Soviet influence in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. Greek military intelligence was instrumental in collecting information on Soviet naval movements, air activities, and potential subversive operations in the region (Liaropoulos & Konstantopoulos, 2014). This intelligence was vital for NATO's broader strategy of containment and deterrence. Intelligence sharing between Greece and other NATO members was formalized through various committees and working groups. Greek intelligence officers participated in joint analysis sessions, contributed to the assessment of Soviet capabilities, and collaborated on developing countermeasures to potential threats. This cooperation enhanced the overall effectiveness of NATO's intelligence apparatus and reinforced the alliance's cohesion. Greece contributed intelligence on:

- Soviet naval maneuvers in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.
- KGB activities in Balkan states, especially in relation to Communist insurgencies.
- Air defense coordination, monitoring Soviet-backed Egyptian military expansions (Moustakis & Sheehan, 2000).

Greek intelligence units worked within the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) framework to ensure interoperability with NATO's broader intelligence apparatus (Moustakis & Sheehan, 2000).

However, the period was not without challenges. The Cyprus issue, particularly during the mid-1950s, strained Greece's relations with NATO allies, especially Turkey and the United Kingdom. These tensions occasionally hampered intelligence cooperation and highlighted the complexities of balancing national interests with alliance commitments. Despite these difficulties, Greece remained a committed member of NATO, recognizing the strategic importance of collective defense mechanisms.

### 2.3 Greek Military Junta (1967–1974): NATO Relations and Intelligence Shifts

The establishment of a military dictatorship in Greece on April 21, 1967, led to significant shifts in the country's internal and external policies, including its interactions within NATO (Veremis, 1998). The junta, known as the "Regime of the Colonels," sought to maintain Greece's position in the alliance while consolidating power domestically. This period witnessed increased militarization of intelligence services, with the regime relying heavily on these agencies to suppress dissent and control information.

NATO's response to the coup was cautious, reflecting the alliance's primary focus on maintaining a united front against the Soviet Union. While some member states expressed concern over the undemocratic nature of the regime, NATO continued to engage with Greece, emphasizing the strategic importance of its geographical position. Intelligence cooperation persisted, albeit with increased scrutiny and reservations from certain allies. The military government prioritized internal security over NATO operations, leading to:

- A decline in NATO intelligence-sharing, as the regime used the intelligence apparatus to monitor internal dissent.
- A shift in priorities—from external threats (e.g., Soviet expansion) to domestic opposition.
- Increased scrutiny from NATO allies, particularly the U.S., over the junta's use of intelligence for repression (Nomikos, 2021).

The junta's emphasis on internal security led to a reorientation of intelligence priorities. Resources were diverted towards domestic surveillance and counterintelligence operations aimed at identifying and neutralizing opposition groups. This inward focus impacted Greece's contributions to NATO's collective intelligence efforts, as the regime's preoccupation with internal stability overshadowed broader alliance objectives. Despite political concerns, NATO continued strategic cooperation with Greek military intelligence, focusing on Soviet naval activities in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern conflicts (Ioannidis, 2020).

### 2.4 Post-Junta Democratic Transition (1974–1990s): Intelligence Restructuring and Geopolitical Shifts

The collapse of the military junta in 1974 and the subsequent restoration of democracy ushered in a period of significant reform for Greece's military and intelligence services (Veremis, 1998). The new democratic government prioritized the depoliticization and professionalization of the intelligence apparatus, aiming to distance it from its previous role as an instrument of authoritarian control. One of the key reforms was the establishment of the National Intelligence Service (EYP) in 1986, replacing the Central Intelligence Service (KYP) (Nomikos & Liapopoulos, 2010).

This transition marked a shift towards a more transparent and accountable intelligence framework, with an emphasis on safeguarding democratic principles and human rights. The restructuring also involved recruiting personnel based on merit and expertise, reducing the influence of political affiliations within the service.

During this period, Greece faced evolving security challenges, including tensions with Turkey, regional instability in the Balkans, and the need to adapt to NATO's changing strategic priorities following the end of the Cold War. Greek military intelligence played a crucial role in addressing these issues, providing

assessments and analyses that informed both national defense strategies and NATO operations.

### 2.5 The Cyprus Conflict (1974): NATO's Intelligence Failures and Greece's Strategic Reassessment

In 1980, Greece fully reintegrated into NATO's military command structure, strengthening intelligence collaboration with Western allies (van Dijk & Sloan, 2020).

- The 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus exposed significant shortcomings in NATO's intelligence capabilities and coordination. The failure to anticipate and prevent the escalation of the conflict highlighted gaps in information sharing and strategic foresight within the alliance (Moustakis & Sheehan, 2000). Intelligence gaps are:
- Failure to predict Turkish movements, despite aerial surveillance. The Weak NATO mediation, leading to Greece's temporary withdrawal from NATO's military command (1974–1980).
- Greek intelligence's response: Increased focus on independent intelligence gathering (Constantinos, 2007). For Greece, the crisis underscored the need for a more autonomous and robust intelligence apparatus capable of safeguarding national interests, even when alliance mechanisms proved inadequate. In the aftermath of the Cyprus conflict, Greece temporarily withdrew from NATO's military command structure, reflecting its dissatisfaction with the alliance's handling of the situation. This decision prompted a comprehensive reassessment of Greece's defense and intelligence policies, leading to initiatives aimed at enhancing self-reliance while maintaining cooperative ties with NATO. The period saw increased investment in intelligence capabilities, focusing on improving early warning systems, threat assessment methodologies, and crisis response mechanisms.

### 2.6 Greek Intelligence During the Balkan Wars (1990s): The Intelligence Gap and NATO Operations in Kosovo and Bosnia

The 1990s Balkan Wars tested Greece's intelligence capabilities, particularly during NATO interventions in Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) (Liapopoulos, 2014).

Greece faced significant intelligence challenges:

- Limited intelligence-sharing mechanisms with NATO on Yugoslav troop movements.
- Greek-Turkish tensions, complicating intelligence operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.
- Internal political divides on NATO intervention (Nomikos, 2021).

By the late 1990s, Greece had modernized its intelligence-sharing practices, integrating into:

- The NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC) in Molesworth, UK.
- Joint NATO-EU intelligence initiatives, improving regional security coordination (van Dijk & Sloan, 2020).

It is obvious that Greece's intelligence role within NATO has evolved from a Cold War counter-Soviet hub to a modern intelligence contributor in regional security. While challenges such

as political instability, the Cyprus conflict, and Balkan tensions have complicated intelligence cooperation, Greece remains a critical player in NATO's intelligence framework.

As NATO intelligence continues adapting to hybrid threats, cyber warfare, and geopolitical shifts, Greece's intelligence apparatus must continue evolving to maintain its strategic importance within the alliance.

### 3. Greece's Involvement in Post-9/11 Counterterrorism Operations

#### 3.1 Strategic Realignment after 9/11

The September 11 attacks in 2001 redefined NATO's core priorities from collective defense of member states against traditional state-based threats to the identification, disruption, and dismantling of transnational terrorist networks. In this context, Greece—historically positioned as a southeastern NATO flank member—was compelled to recalibrate its national intelligence architecture to align with NATO's post-9/11 strategic doctrine (van Dijk & Sloan, 2020). The operational paradigm shifted from passive intelligence monitoring to proactive, preemptive intelligence-led operations against both internal and external terrorist threats.

Immediately following the attacks, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history, framing the event as a collective security breach (North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], 2001). Greece, while not a core member of NATO's counterterrorist spearhead at the time, recognized the emerging asymmetric threat environment and began actively participating in NATO's counterterrorism frameworks. The result was a slow but steady transformation of Greek military intelligence from a nationally oriented and bureaucratically rigid apparatus to a more outward-facing, interoperable component of NATO's broader intelligence infrastructure (Kotoulas, 2020).

#### 3.1.2 Institutional Reform and Intelligence Modernization

One of the most critical steps taken by the Greek government in the early 2000s was the modernization of the National Intelligence Service (Ethniki Ypiresia Pliroforion - EYP). Historically marred by political manipulation and Cold War-era rigidity, EYP began undergoing structural reforms with the objective of becoming compatible with NATO and EU intelligence-sharing systems (Nomikos, 2010). These reforms included:

- Creation of a Counterterrorism Directorate, specializing in both domestic and international threats.
- Enhanced SIGINT and HUMINT capacities, particularly in urban centers and border regions.
- Recruitment of officers with international training, particularly from institutions like the NATO Defense College.
- Integration into the Counter Terrorism Unit of Europol and participation in NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC).

By 2004, Greece had updated its national security doctrines to explicitly acknowledge the centrality of terrorism, organized crime, and hybrid threats to its national defense strategy (Tsailas, 2020).

#### 3.1.3 Operational Milestone: Athens 2004 Olympic Games

A critical testing ground for Greece's updated intelligence capabilities came with the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens. Hosting the event in a global security climate dominated

by terrorism concerns demanded an unprecedented level of security coordination, both domestically and internationally. Greece established the Olympic Intelligence Centre (OIC), a multi-agency command and control center that worked closely with NATO, the CIA, MI6, Mossad, and other intelligence services (Nomikos, 2004).

For the first time, EYP operated not only as a passive collector of domestic intelligence but also as a centralized node for interagency coordination, real-time risk analysis, and cyber threat detection. Intelligence efforts during the Olympics included:

- Deployment of over 70,000 security personnel, including special forces and rapid response units.
- Real-time surveillance integration with NATO's Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS).
- Use of facial recognition technologies and biometric screening at ports and airports.
- Maritime and aerial reconnaissance patrols in the Aegean in coordination with NATO's Standing Naval Forces (Nomikos, 2010).

The Athens Olympics are widely viewed as a pivotal moment in the normalization of intelligence-led operations in Greece, offering a prototype for future international security collaboration (Tsailas, 2020).

#### 3.1.4 NATO's Operation Active Endeavour and Greece's Maritime Intelligence

In the aftermath of 9/11, NATO launched Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in 2001, a maritime operation designed to detect and deter the movement of terrorists or weapons of mass destruction in the Mediterranean Sea. Greece played an essential operational and intelligence role in OAE, utilizing its geographic position and naval infrastructure for surveillance and interdiction missions (van Dijk).

Greek naval intelligence contributed by:

- Tracking vessel movements in high-traffic corridors such as the Straits of Gibraltar, Eastern Aegean, and Dardanelles.
- Sharing data with NATO's Maritime Command (MARCOM) using interoperable systems aligned with NATO's Federated Mission Networking (FMN) architecture.
- Conducting boarding operations and cargo inspections under NATO auspices.

The operation further incentivized Greece to develop a maritime intelligence doctrine, which now forms part of its broader contribution to NATO's Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) frameworks (Kotoulas, 2020).

#### 3.1.5 Intelligence and Counterterrorism Lessons Learned

While Greece has not experienced a high-impact terrorist event on the scale of 9/11, it has long dealt with domestic terrorism, notably from groups like 17 November, ELA, and Revolutionary Struggle. Post-9/11 reforms enabled Greece to address domestic terrorism using international counterterrorism methodologies. Intelligence-led arrests, preemptive investigations, and legal interoperability with NATO counterterrorism laws were greatly enhanced (Tsailas, 2020).

This dual internal-external intelligence focus is reflected in Greece's consistent participation in NATO exercises and strategic

intelligence dialogues. Particularly relevant is Greece's role in Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR) operations within NATO, helping shape regional responses to terrorism through actionable intelligence (Nomikos, 2010).

### **3.2 Intelligence Cooperation in the War on Terror: Greece's Participation in NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC)**

#### **3.2.1 The Genesis of NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC)**

The establishment of the **NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC)** in 2006 marked a significant transformation in the Alliance's post-9/11 intelligence framework. Based in Molesworth, United Kingdom, NIFC was designed to integrate intelligence inputs from all NATO member states, enhancing real-time decision-making capabilities in counterterrorism, asymmetric warfare, and hybrid threats (NATO, n.d.). The NIFC's structure reflects NATO's broader shift from Cold War-style compartmentalization to horizontal, real-time, multilateral intelligence fusion (Goldman, & Rascoff, 2016).

The Centre incorporates a unique model of cooperation by bringing together civilian and military intelligence agencies, national attachés, analysts, and strategic planners from various NATO countries. Greece was among the founding contributors to NIFC, recognizing the opportunity to reposition itself as a strategic intelligence actor in Southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean (Nomikos, 2010).

#### **3.2.2 Greece's Integration into the NIFC**

Greece's participation in NIFC involved both structural contributions and operational integration. Structurally, the Hellenic National Defence General Staff (HNDGS) and the National Intelligence Service (EYP) began deploying liaison officers and analysts to NIFC shortly after its formation. These representatives worked in intelligence cells focused on:

- Southeastern Europe and the Balkans
- Eastern Mediterranean stability
- Maritime security and migrant flows
- Counterterrorism and radicalization tracking (Kostoulas, 2020)

Operationally, Greek intelligence officers contributed critical regional insights, particularly related to Turkish military maneuvers, migrant trafficking networks in the Aegean, and regional extremist organizations. The inclusion of Greek officers with linguistic and cultural familiarity with the Balkans significantly strengthened NATO's Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) capabilities in the area.

#### **3.2.3 Intelligence-Sharing Mechanisms and Interoperability**

One of the primary challenges in intelligence cooperation among NATO members lies in national restrictions and information silos (Glees & Davies, 2020). Greece, traditionally known for maintaining operational independence, initially faced interoperability limitations due to legacy systems and bureaucratic constraints. However, participation in NIFC facilitated a transition toward full-spectrum interoperability:

- Greece adopted NATO Intelligence Doctrine (AJP-2 series) for standardization.

- EYP analysts began using NATO-compatible data exchange platforms, such as

INTEL-FS and JISR-NET.

- Training exchanges were established through the NATO School Oberammergau, strengthening Greek officers' methodological alignment with Allied standards (NATO, 2024).

This interoperability enhanced not only data integration, but also strategic trust, enabling Greece to be more involved in sensitive intelligence tasks, particularly in Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR)-linked missions.

#### **3.2.4 Regional Intelligence Leadership and Soft Power Projection**

Through NIFC, Greece found an opportunity to redefine its intelligence diplomacy. As one of the few Balkan countries within NATO with advanced ISR capabilities and a strategic Mediterranean location, Greece was uniquely positioned to act as a regional intelligence hub.

- It served as a mediator of Balkan intelligence flows, particularly between Western NATO members and less developed partners such as North Macedonia and Albania.
- Greece supported NIFC operations related to foreign fighter tracking during the Syrian conflict by monitoring radicalization routes through Thrace and Athens, feeding actionable intelligence into NIFC's CT units (Kotoulas, 2020).
- Athens has increasingly used this intelligence cooperation to project soft power in regional negotiations, enhancing its diplomatic footprint beyond traditional military means.

#### **3.2.5 Intelligence Failures and Institutional Learning**

Despite progress, Greece's participation in NIFC has not been without shortcomings. A major intelligence gap occurred during the 2015–2016 migration crisis, where fragmented information-sharing and political hesitance delayed NATO's coordinated response to human trafficking and terrorism infiltration across refugee flows.

These incidents prompted internal audits and subsequent upgrades to Greece's fusion architecture, including:

- The establishment of a National Intelligence Coordination Authority under the Prime Minister's office in 2019.
- Integration of real-time surveillance feeds from FRONTEX and NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM).
- Launch of joint intelligence task forces operating out of Crete and Thessaloniki focused on Balkan threat vectors.

#### **3.2.6 Greece and the Future of Multinational Intelligence Cooperation**

Looking forward, Greece is investing in its role at NIFC by expanding its cyber-intelligence footprint, particularly as part of NATO's Hybrid Threats Division. Greek agencies are working on:

- Counter-disinformation operations targeting Russian narratives in the Balkans.



- Development of AI-assisted analytics in maritime domain awareness (Liaropoulos & Nikolakakis, 2022).
- Closer cooperation with EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN), promoting synergy between NATO and EU intelligence networks.

This expanded engagement confirms Greece's intention to shift from a peripheral consumer of intelligence to a regional provider, marking a strategic evolution in its post-9/11 intelligence trajectory within the NATO architecture.

### **3.3 Greek Cybersecurity and Hybrid Warfare: Greece's Contributions to NATO's Cyber Defense and Intelligence Gathering**

#### **3.3.1 Cybersecurity and Hybrid Warfare in the NATO Context**

In the contemporary security environment, NATO faces a spectrum of challenges that transcend traditional military confrontations, notably in the realms of cybersecurity and hybrid warfare. Hybrid warfare integrates conventional military tactics with cyber operations, disinformation campaigns, and other non-traditional methods to destabilize adversaries (NATO, n.d.). Cybersecurity, therefore, has become a cornerstone of NATO's collective defense strategy, necessitating robust collaboration among member states. Greece, situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, plays a pivotal role in this collaborative framework.

#### **3.3.2 Greece's Strategic Position and Cybersecurity Initiatives**

Greece's geographical location endows it with strategic significance in monitoring and countering cyber threats emanating from the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. Recognizing the evolving nature of these threats, Greece has undertaken substantial measures to bolster its cybersecurity infrastructure. The Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS) has established a dedicated Cyber Defense Directorate responsible for safeguarding military networks and coordinating cyber defense operations (Balkan Insight, 2023). This directorate collaborates closely with NATO's cyber defense bodies to ensure interoperability and information sharing.

#### **3.3.3 Integration with NATO's Cyber Defense Framework**

NATO's approach to cyber defense emphasizes collective resilience and rapid response to cyber incidents. The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), based in Tallinn, Estonia, serves as a hub for research, training, and exercises in cyber defense (NATO CCDCOE, 2025). Greece actively participates in CCDCOE initiatives, contributing expertise and benefiting from shared knowledge on emerging cyber threats and defense mechanisms.

Furthermore, Greece engages in NATO's Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (JISR) system, which integrates intelligence from various domains to support decision-making processes (NATO, n.d.). Through JISR, Greek cyber intelligence assets contribute to a comprehensive situational awareness, enhancing NATO's ability to detect and respond to cyber threats promptly.

#### **3.3.4 Addressing Hybrid Threats through Multinational Exercises**

Hybrid threats, characterized by the amalgamation of conventional and unconventional tactics, pose complex challenges to NATO members. Greece has demonstrated commitment to countering such threats by hosting and participating in multinational exercises

aimed at enhancing readiness and interoperability. For instance, the "SIKINOS-24" Intelligence Seminar, organized by the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Greece (NRDC-GR) in September 2024, focused on improving intelligence knowledge and understanding of hybrid threats (NRDC-GR, 2024). These exercises facilitate the exchange of best practices and the development of cohesive strategies to address hybrid warfare scenarios. (NATO RDCG, 2025)

#### **3.3.5 Enhancing Critical Infrastructure Protection**

The protection of critical infrastructure is integral to national security and resilience against cyber-attacks. Greece has prioritized the safeguarding of its critical infrastructure by proposing the establishment of Fusion Centers in collaboration with Mediterranean nations such as Spain, France, and Italy (Nomikos, 2016). These centers aim to facilitate intelligence sharing and coordinated responses to threats targeting critical infrastructure, thereby enhancing regional stability and security.

#### **3.3.6 Challenges and Future Directions**

Despite significant progress, Greece faces ongoing challenges in the cyber domain, including the need for continuous technological upgrades, addressing the shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals, and navigating the complexities of international cyber law. To address these challenges, Greece is investing in education and training programs to cultivate a proficient cybersecurity workforce and is actively participating in international dialogues to shape norms and policies governing cyberspace.

Looking ahead, Greece aims to further integrate its cyber defense capabilities with NATO's initiatives, emphasizing the importance of collective defense mechanisms in the digital age. By strengthening public-private partnerships and fostering innovation in cybersecurity technologies, Greece seeks to enhance its resilience against cyber threats and contribute effectively to NATO's overarching security objectives.

### **3.4 Greek Intelligence in the Mediterranean Security Crisis: Migrant Flows, Turkish Conflicts, and NATO Intelligence Coordination**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction: Strategic Turbulence in the Eastern Mediterranean**

The Mediterranean has long been a crucible of geopolitical tension, but the past two decades have seen the region transform into a critical arena for NATO intelligence cooperation. Greece, positioned at the southeastern edge of Europe, is central to the Alliance's efforts in addressing asymmetric threats such as irregular migration, hybrid tactics by state actors, and maritime disputes. The interplay between mass migration, Turkish-Greek tensions, and broader regional instability demands a nuanced and proactive intelligence posture. Greek military intelligence has increasingly operated as a nodal point between national security imperatives and NATO's collective strategic intelligence architecture (Tziarras, 2016).

#### **3.4.2 Intelligence and Irregular Migration: Monitoring and Coordination**

Following the 2015 migrant crisis, Greece emerged as one of the primary entry points into Europe for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict zones, particularly Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. This migration phenomenon evolved rapidly from a humanitarian challenge to a significant security concern. Intelligence gathering concerning human trafficking networks, radicalization risks, and



logistical flows became critical to national and NATO-wide security (Triandafyllidou, 2017). Greek military intelligence, in conjunction with NATO's Operation *Sea Guardian* and *Poseidon Rapid Intervention*, developed a maritime surveillance regime combining satellite imaging, human intelligence (HUMINT), and signal intelligence (SIGINT) to track movement across the Aegean (NATO, n.d.).

The Greek Armed Forces' coordination with Frontex and the NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM) enhanced the capacity to share actionable intelligence, contributing to pre-emptive interception operations and threat assessments. Despite being primarily a civilian border agency, Frontex relies heavily on national military intelligence when operating in complex maritime zones — further emphasizing the integrative intelligence role Greece plays (Carrera, 2017).

### **3.4.3 Turkish Assertiveness and the Role of Strategic Military Intelligence**

Greek-Turkish relations have been marked by volatility, particularly over issues such as the delineation of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), the status of islets in the Aegean, and Cyprus. In recent years, Turkish naval expansionism, energy exploration activities, and militarization of contested maritime areas have intensified bilateral tensions (Heraclides, 2010). These dynamics necessitated a recalibration of Greek military intelligence, which now prioritizes real-time monitoring of Turkish defense posture and naval deployments in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Greek intelligence units have increasingly employed advanced geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) and reconnaissance drones to map Turkish activities. At the NATO level, such data is fused within the Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC) in the UK and contributes to broader early warning mechanisms (NATO, n.d.). This shared intelligence framework is vital, as NATO faces the delicate task of maintaining cohesion between two member states — Greece and Turkey — while ensuring regional deterrence remains credible.

### **3.4.4 Greek Intelligence Contributions to NATO in Crisis Scenarios**

The 2020 Evros border incident, when Turkish authorities encouraged large groups of migrants to attempt illegal crossings into Greece, served as a de facto hybrid operation. The use of migration as a pressure tactic reflected the evolving character of regional destabilization, requiring robust and rapid intelligence responses (Psaropoulos, 2020). Greek military intelligence provided immediate situational reporting to NATO, identifying patterns of state-directed migrant flows and deploying countermeasures at key border points.

Furthermore, Greek participation in NATO's *Counter Hybrid Support Teams* (CHSTs) illustrates its evolving intelligence role. These deployable teams assist member states in identifying hybrid threats, assessing vulnerabilities, and supporting national response strategies. Greece, given its firsthand exposure to multifaceted regional threats, has both contributed to and benefited from these deployments, particularly in reinforcing the resilience of its civil-military coordination systems (NATO, 2024).

### **3.4.5 Intelligence Challenges in the Mediterranean Theater**

Despite progress, Greece faces substantial challenges in maintaining intelligence superiority in a region as dynamic as the

Eastern Mediterranean. Chief among these is the limitation of real-time intelligence processing capacities, especially in the maritime domain, where dispersed archipelagic terrain complicates surveillance efforts. Additionally, the legal and political tensions within NATO regarding Greece-Turkey disputes can hinder intelligence-sharing mechanisms (Karakasis, 2019).

Another ongoing issue is the effective fusion of intelligence across domains — from cyber and maritime to human terrain analysis. While NATO's interoperability doctrine provides a framework for integration, national sensitivities and classification restrictions often obstruct seamless collaboration. Greece has advocated for greater institutional autonomy in regional intelligence cooperation, proposing multilateral intelligence cells specifically tailored to Mediterranean contingencies (Nomikos, 2016).

### **3.4.6 Future Intelligence Integration: Recommendations and Strategic Outlook**

To enhance its intelligence posture, Greece is moving toward a model of modular integration, where national intelligence services embed liaisons in NATO structures to ensure real-time updates and harmonization. Investing in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven analytics, autonomous surveillance platforms, and satellite constellations will be critical for achieving operational intelligence dominance (Kyriakidis, 2024). These technologies not only bolster situational awareness but also reduce the cognitive load on human analysts — enabling faster decision-making in time-sensitive scenarios.

Greece's forward-looking doctrine also envisions the establishment of a Mediterranean Intelligence Coordination Group (MICG), which would bring together NATO, EU, and regional partners to synchronize threat assessments and crisis response plans (Hellenic Ministry of Defense, 2022). By reinforcing its role as both a frontline state and a contributor to multinational intelligence architectures, Greece aspires to shape NATO's evolving intelligence doctrine in its southern flank.

## **3.5 Greek Military Intelligence in Countering Russian Influence in the Balkans**

### **3.5.1 Introduction: Russia's Strategic Interests in the Balkans**

Russia's persistent geopolitical engagement in the Balkans reflects a long-standing strategy of preserving influence in Southeast Europe as a counterbalance to Western integration efforts. The Western Balkans — encompassing states like Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia — are viewed by the Kremlin as critical for maintaining leverage against NATO and the European Union. This strategy has manifested in hybrid operations, intelligence subversion, disinformation campaigns, and support for ethnonationalist political actors (Bugajski & Conley, 2016). Against this backdrop, Greece's geographic proximity, cultural-historical ties with Balkan neighbors, and NATO membership render its military intelligence a central player in regional counter-influence efforts.

### **3.5.2 The Post-Crimea Intelligence Shift**

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its subsequent destabilization operations in Eastern Ukraine, NATO began reconfiguring its threat perception to include hybrid warfare and malign foreign influence. Greece, traditionally less vocal about Russian activities, recalibrated its defense intelligence posture in light of increasing Kremlin-backed activities in the Balkans (Polyakova & Meserole, 2019). The establishment of NATO's

Counter Hybrid Support Teams (CHST) and the bolstering of its Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC) facilitated greater integration between Greek intelligence services and NATO's early warning systems.

Greece's National Intelligence Service (EYP) and Hellenic National Defence General Staff (GEETHA) began placing greater emphasis on SIGINT and open-source intelligence (OSINT) to track Russian disinformation targeting pro-EU sentiment in countries such as North Macedonia during the Prespa Agreement process (Economides & Ker-Lindsay, 2015). This reflected a doctrinal shift from traditional state-to-state intelligence monitoring to multi-domain hybrid threat analysis.

### **3.5.3 North Macedonia and the Prespa Agreement: A Greek Intelligence Pivot**

The 2018 Prespa Agreement — aimed at resolving the decades-long naming dispute between Greece and what was then the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) — became a flashpoint for Russian influence operations. Greek intelligence reported multiple Russian efforts to undermine the agreement, including financial support to nationalist groups and disinformation campaigns opposing the deal (Toal, 2017). The goal: prevent North Macedonia's accession to NATO.

Greek authorities, working alongside NATO partners, identified Russian diplomatic and intelligence activities in the form of covert funding, online propaganda, and interference in civic mobilization. Intelligence coordination was critical: HUMINT and OSINT feeds were combined with social network analysis to identify proxies and amplify counter-narratives (Jozwiak, 2019). The intelligence-led identification of Russian subversion enabled Athens to expel Russian diplomats accused of activities inconsistent with their status — an unusual move signaling a more assertive Greek counterintelligence stance (BBC, 2018).

### **3.5.4 Russian Presence in Serbia and Montenegro: Greek Surveillance and NATO Briefings**

Serbia has long served as a strategic foothold for Russian influence in the Balkans. Greece, despite maintaining cordial relations with Belgrade, has carefully monitored the presence of the Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Centre in Niš — often described as a civilian facade for intelligence activities (Galeotti, 2017). Greek intelligence reports shared through NATO platforms have provided critical insights into the logistical networks enabling Russian soft power, such as religious diplomacy, military training support, and strategic investments in energy infrastructure.

In Montenegro, Greece supported NATO intelligence operations during the 2016 coup attempt allegedly backed by Russian operatives seeking to derail Montenegro's NATO accession (Barber, 2017). While Greece did not take the lead, it provided strategic situational awareness regarding potential spillovers in Albania and North Macedonia, where ethnic tensions could be similarly exploited.

### **3.5.5 Intelligence Methods: Hybrid Threat Detection and Cyber Defense**

Greece's involvement in hybrid threat intelligence in the Balkans includes advanced monitoring of disinformation ecosystems, troll farms, and cyber attacks targeting military institutions and democratic infrastructure. Within the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), Greek cyber units analyze malware signatures, trace phishing campaigns, and cross-

reference metadata linked to Russian-aligned hacker groups such as APT28 (Rid, 2020).

Moreover, Greece has invested in developing regional cyber intelligence cooperation, particularly with Romania, Bulgaria, and North Macedonia, focusing on cyber-forensics, satellite surveillance, and early warning AI platforms. The Balkan-wide initiative titled the Southeast Europe Cyber Intelligence Network (SEECIN), launched in 2021, includes a Greek-led working group on foreign state cyber influence, strengthening proactive detection and attribution capabilities (Nomikos, 2021).

### **3.5.6 Intelligence Diplomacy and Regional Partnerships**

Greek military intelligence has leveraged bilateral defense cooperation agreements with Balkan states to facilitate intelligence diplomacy — the exchange of intelligence through formal defense attachés, training programs, and embedded liaison officers. Through these channels, Greece has contributed to capacity building in intelligence literacy, counter-hybrid doctrine, and military pedagogy. This strategy aligns with NATO's 360-degree approach, which calls for member states to act as "security exporters" in their regional ecosystems (NATO, 2024).

Examples include Greece's role in organizing joint intelligence exercises such as *Operation Balkan Shield* and strategic wargaming simulations aimed at preparing national intelligence units for Russian disinformation campaigns around elections and military drills. Greek officers have also been seconded to the EU's Hybrid Fusion Cell in Brussels, where they contribute intelligence reports on Russian-linked influence narratives in the Balkans (European External Action Service [EEAS], 2021).

### **3.5.7 Assessment and Outlook**

Greece has evolved into a pivotal intelligence actor in the Balkans, not just due to geography, but through deliberate doctrinal shifts and strategic investments in hybrid threat detection. Its ability to track and counter Russian influence operations — from cyber manipulation to civic destabilization - has made it a reliable contributor to NATO's collective security framework. Yet challenges remain: inconsistent intelligence-sharing protocols, limited technical capacity in smaller Balkan states, and the necessity to balance regional diplomacy with national interests.

To deepen its influence and resilience, Greece must continue to expand training initiatives, invest in multilingual OSINT capabilities, and advocate for a Balkan-focused NATO intelligence hub based in Thessaloniki - a proposal under review since 2022. Such a structure would consolidate regional threat reporting and streamline actionable intelligence among frontline states, enhancing deterrence against malign foreign actors like Russia.

## **4. Greece, NATO Intelligence, and the European Union's Strategic Autonomy**

Greece's geopolitical significance as a southeastern European state positioned at the nexus of Europe, Asia, and Africa grants it a critical role in shaping regional and transatlantic security. As a member of both NATO and the European Union (EU), Greece straddles two distinct but increasingly interlinked security architectures. The rise of hybrid threats, cyber warfare, maritime insecurity, and great-power rivalry has demanded more cohesive intelligence frameworks among allies, yet institutional divergences and geopolitical frictions—particularly involving Greece's tensions with Turkey—complicate these processes.

This chapter examines Greece's evolving position within NATO and EU intelligence ecosystems, analyzing its contributions to intelligence sharing, its balancing act between NATO and EU structures, its regional rivalries, and its positioning within the broader debate on European strategic autonomy. The chapter applies an interdisciplinary methodology, combining strategic theory, institutional analysis, and case study evaluation, to present an original academic lens on Greece's role as both a frontline state and an intelligence mediator.

#### **4.1 The CSDP and NATO: Overlap, Tensions, and Intelligence Duality. The CSDP's Growing Intelligence Ambitions**

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) aims to consolidate member-state defense resources for peacekeeping, crisis management, and strategic autonomy. Intelligence functions within the EU remain decentralized, but the 2017 establishment of the European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and subsequent expansion of the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) have signaled a desire for strategic intelligence independence (Faleg, 2021).

However, the CSDP lacks NATO's integrated command structure and real-time intelligence capabilities, which are rooted in its long-standing experience in collective defense. NATO's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities are far more robust, particularly through its Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC), Allied Command Transformation (ACT), and the Joint ISR initiative (NATO, n.d.).

##### **4.1.2 Institutional Overlap and Friction**

Despite EU-NATO cooperation frameworks, intelligence-sharing mechanisms remain fragmented. The "Berlin Plus" agreement of 2002 allowed the EU to use NATO assets for crisis management, but political obstacles - most notably the Cyprus-Turkey impasse—limit deep intelligence integration. Greece, while supporting European defense efforts, remains reliant on NA

TO for hard-power intelligence support.

This duality places Greece in a complex position: it must adhere to NATO security protocols while simultaneously contributing to EU CSDP missions. Intelligence overlap is particularly pronounced in operations such as maritime surveillance in the Eastern Mediterranean, where both organizations have mandates but differing intelligence procedures (Kotoulas, 2020).

#### **4.2 Greece's Strategic Contributions and Intelligence Roles**

##### **EU FRONTEX and Maritime Intelligence**

Greece's geographic location makes it a frontline state for EU border security. As such, it plays a crucial role in FRONTEX operations, particularly through the Joint Operation Poseidon in the Aegean. While FRONTEX is a civilian agency, it increasingly integrates military intelligence from member states—especially Greece—on trafficking routes, smuggling, and border crossings (Carrera & Cortinovis, 2019).

Greek maritime intelligence, drawn from naval patrols, satellite surveillance, and drone ISR, feeds into both EU and NATO frameworks, demonstrating its dual utility. This maritime role has elevated Greece's strategic intelligence value within the EU, positioning it as a key node in external border protection.

##### **4.2.1 Participation in INTCEN and EU Military Intelligence**

Greece contributes analysts and strategic assessments to INTCEN, especially concerning regional instability in the Balkans, Libya, and the Eastern Mediterranean. While EU intelligence remains intergovernmental and not fully centralized, Greece's inputs on hybrid threats, foreign influence (notably Russian), and migration dynamics have informed EU policy (Blockmans & Crosson, 2021).

Moreover, Greece participates in the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), contributing to joint defense intelligence projects such as cyber situational awareness and military mobility.

#### **4.3 Intelligence Rivalries and Strategic Balancing NATO-EU Competition and Greek Equilibrium**

The rivalry between NATO and EU intelligence paradigms often reflects broader transatlantic tensions. While NATO retains superiority in military intelligence collection and strategic warning, the EU aspires to develop autonomous capabilities that serve its political agenda, particularly in regions like Africa and the Mediterranean (Howorth, 2019). Greece must balance its commitment to NATO's collective security mechanisms with its advocacy for a more self-sufficient European security identity.

Athens often acts as a diplomatic bridge, advocating for complementarity rather than redundancy. Its intelligence diplomacy emphasizes interoperability, calling for shared early warning systems and crisis coordination mechanisms that respect both NATO classification and EU decision-making autonomy (Kotoulas, 2020).

#### **4.4 Greek-Turkish Intelligence Conflicts in Multilateral Frameworks**

##### **Strategic Rivalry and Intelligence Weaponization**

Greece and Turkey, both NATO members, have a long history of intelligence conflict. Incidents such as the 2020 standoff over Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon exploration saw both nations deploy surveillance aircraft, cyber tools, and maritime intelligence assets in a high-stakes geopolitical chess game (Tziarras, 2016).

NATO was forced to mediate with deconfliction mechanisms, but its intelligence neutrality was questioned.

The intelligence standoff extends to the EU, where Greece and Cyprus block deeper EU-NATO cooperation due to Turkey's non-recognition of Cyprus. This deadlock hampers joint intelligence efforts, particularly in hybrid threat environments (Acikmese & Triantaphyllou, 2016).

##### **4.4.1 Cyber and Counter-Intelligence Dimensions**

Greek intelligence has also accused Turkish operatives of engaging in cyber espionage against Greek ministries and media, prompting the Hellenic National Intelligence Service (EYP) to upgrade its cyber defense protocols in cooperation with NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) (Nomikos, 2021). These tensions affect Greece's ability to share intelligence multilaterally, often leading to bilateral arrangements with trusted allies like France or the U.S. outside NATO's formal channels.

#### **4.4.2 Greece and the Debate on European Strategic Autonomy**

##### **Autonomy vs. Interdependence**

The concept of "strategic autonomy"—the EU's capacity to act independently in defense—is hotly debated. Greece supports this vision but insists it must complement, not undermine, NATO cohesion. Athens sees autonomy as a tool for regional



empowerment, particularly in deterring Turkish assertiveness and stabilizing the Balkans (Grevi, 2020).

#### **4.4.3 Franco-Hellenic Defense Pact and PESCO Engagement**

In 2021, Greece signed a bilateral defense agreement with France, including a mutual assistance clause and provisions for intelligence sharing. This agreement marked a symbolic and strategic step toward European defense integration, bypassing some of the friction within NATO (Atlantic Council, 2021). Greece also participates in several PESCO projects - especially those focused on military mobility, secure communications, and cyber intelligence infrastructure.

These efforts reflect a broader Greek strategy: leverage NATO's operational superiority while fostering an EU identity that can respond to crises where U.S. leadership is absent or limited.

It is clear that Greece's intelligence posture reflects its dual identity: a NATO frontline ally and an EU member advocating for strategic autonomy. Its contributions to maritime intelligence, hybrid threat detection, and cyber defense underscore its importance in both institutions. Yet, Greece's role is constrained by the institutional fragmentation between NATO and the EU, and by its adversarial relationship with Turkey, which complicates multilateral intelligence coordination.

Nonetheless, Greece has emerged as a mediator, contributor, and innovator in intelligence diplomacy. Its push for balanced engagement—investing in EU intelligence development while remaining a reliable NATO actor—places it at the heart of the evolving Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Future trajectories will depend on Athens' ability to maintain strategic coherence, expand regional partnerships, and modernize its intelligence doctrine amid shifting geopolitical currents.

## **5. Contemporary Challenges for NATO Intelligence and Greek Military Strategy**

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, shifting power balances, and multidimensional threats, NATO intelligence and its members must evolve continuously to maintain operational relevance and strategic superiority. Greece, positioned on the geopolitical fault line between East and West, plays a vital role in the NATO intelligence ecosystem. Facing traditional adversaries, such as Turkey, and emerging threats like cyber warfare and AI-based espionage, the Hellenic Republic is simultaneously a frontline state, a strategic intelligence contributor, and a regional stabilizer.

This chapter examines the critical challenges confronting NATO intelligence and how they intersect with Greek military strategy. It addresses five key areas: Greece's intelligence posture in response to Turkish aggression in the Aegean, its evolving role in NATO intelligence in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, adaptations to NATO's changing intelligence framework, Greek cyber-intelligence capabilities, and preparations for future intelligence threats including AI and cyber espionage. The chapter employs a mixed methodology based on strategic theory, case study analysis, and official NATO and Greek government documentation.

### **5.1 Greek Military Intelligence and Turkish Aggression in the Aegean Historical and Geostrategic Context**

Greek-Turkish relations have been shaped by decades of disputes over maritime boundaries, airspace, and sovereignty rights in the Aegean Sea. Tensions have repeatedly escalated into military confrontations, such as the Imia/Kardak crisis in 1996 and repeated violations of Greek airspace by Turkish jets. Although both countries are NATO members, their adversarial postures strain alliance cohesion (Heraclides, 2010).

#### **5.1.2 Surveillance and Real-Time Intelligence Monitoring**

To counter Turkish assertiveness, Greek military intelligence has invested heavily in ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) technologies. The Hellenic National Defense General Staff (GEETHA) coordinates maritime and aerial surveillance through platforms such as Heron UAVs, maritime patrol aircraft, and satellite links integrated into NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre (NATO, n.d.).

This has enabled real-time monitoring of Turkish naval deployments and drilling activities in contested waters, particularly around Kastellorizo and south of Crete. Greek intelligence has also uncovered Turkish hybrid tactics, including information warfare campaigns targeting Greek media and digital disinformation aimed at destabilizing domestic cohesion (Nomikos, 2021).

#### **5.1.3 NATO's Role and Limitations**

While NATO has served as a deconfliction platform during crises, its intelligence-sharing mechanisms are often limited in bilateral disputes. Greece has sought to bypass these limitations through trilateral partnerships with France and Israel, enabling deeper intelligence cooperation on Aegean security (Tziarras, 2016).

Moreover, joint naval drills such as "Medusa" and "INIOCHOS" have enhanced intelligence sharing and tested real-time threat assessments among regional partners, simulating Turkish hybrid tactics and maritime incursions.

### **5.2 The Russia-Ukraine War: Greece's Role in NATO Intelligence Against Russia. Strategic Realignment after 2022**

Although traditionally more diplomatically aligned with Russia due to cultural and religious ties, Greece decisively condemned the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and aligned with NATO's strategic objectives. This shift included not only military aid to Ukraine but enhanced intelligence cooperation with NATO regarding Russian hybrid tactics in Southeastern Europe (Polyakova & Meserole, 2019).

Greece has become increasingly concerned about Russian activities in the Balkans, particularly in North Macedonia and Serbia, where Russian influence operations have attempted to derail NATO and EU integration (Jozwiak, 2019). Greek intelligence monitors pro-Russian networks that exploit religious institutions, media platforms, and energy dependencies.

#### **5.2.1 Contributions to NATO Fusion Centres and ISR Networks**

Greece contributes to NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC) in the UK, offering regional data on maritime routes used by Russian naval forces and disinformation flows into the Balkans (NATO n.d.). Greek naval bases in Crete and the Peloponnese serve as intelligence outposts for tracking Russian submarine movement through the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly after the sabotage of Nord Stream pipelines and the increased focus on undersea infrastructure (Kotoulas, 2020).

Moreover, Greece's participation in NATO's Joint ISR Initiative enables coordination in satellite-based reconnaissance and early-warning systems, especially valuable for tracking military logistics and cyber intrusion patterns linked to Russian intelligence services.

### **5.3 NATO's Evolving Intelligence Framework and Greece's Strategic Adaptations. NATO Intelligence Reform and the JISD**

NATO's 2016 Warsaw Summit initiated a transformation of the alliance's intelligence structure. The creation of the Joint Intelligence and Security Division (JISD) at NATO Headquarters and the emphasis on Allied ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) sought to address 21st-century threats, including terrorism, cyberattacks, and hybrid warfare.

These reforms aimed to centralize strategic assessments, integrate military and civilian intelligence sources, and allow faster decision-making in crises. Greece has adapted by reconfiguring its own national doctrine, aligning GEETHA and EYP with NATO's new intelligence fusion standards (Kotoulas, 2020).

#### **5.3.1 Greek Adaptation and Multidomain Intelligence**

Greece has pursued doctrinal transformation through its 2022 National Defence Strategy, prioritizing:

- Multidomain situational awareness (land, sea, air, cyber, and space)
- Predictive analytics for early-warning intelligence
- Integration of national systems with NATO and EU intelligence platforms (Hellenic MoD, 2022)

One notable example is Greece's contribution to the Strategic Direction South Hub in Naples, where it provides regional intelligence on North African migration trends and potential terrorist networks that exploit maritime channels into the EU (NATO Strategic Direction South Hub, n.d.).

### **5.4 Greek Cyber-Intelligence Capabilities in the NATO Network**

#### **National Cybersecurity Expansion**

The proliferation of ransomware, state-sponsored cyberattacks, and election interference has led Greece to bolster its cyber-intelligence infrastructure. In 2019, Greece established the Cybersecurity Directorate within its Ministry of Digital Governance and later integrated cyber threat intelligence into military command under GEETHA's Cyber Command (National Cybersecurity Authority, 2020).

Greece's capabilities now include:

- Real-time threat monitoring via Cyber Threat Intelligence Platforms (CTIPs).
- Cyber range training simulations.
- Enhanced malware attribution through AI algorithms (Nomikos, 2021).

#### **5.4.1 NATO Collaboration and Collective Defense**

Greece contributes cyber-threat data to NATO's Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) and participates in exercises such as Cyber Coalition and Locked Shields organized by the NATO CCDCOE. Greek teams have tested offensive-defensive strategies, including penetration testing and digital forensics for critical infrastructure defense.

Greece has participated in NATO cyber defense operations, including Cyber Coalition exercises, alongside several Balkan

nations. While there is no formal Balkan Cybersecurity Cluster under NATO, regional collaboration continues to grow in response to Russian-aligned cyber groups such as Killnet and APT28.

### **5.5 Future Intelligence Threats: AI Warfare, Cyber Espionage, and Greece's Response**

#### **Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Intelligence Doctrine**

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) in military contexts is revolutionizing intelligence processing, decision-making, and battlefield automation. NATO's Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2024) outlines the ethical use of AI in ISR, targeting, and information management, urging member states to invest in trustworthy, explainable, and mission-aligned AI systems (NATO, 2024).

Greece has responded by launching AI-focused defense research with universities such as the National Technical University of Athens, and partnering with the EU's EDA-funded AI4DEF program. Greek military doctrine now includes exploration of:

- Predictive threat models
- Deep learning-based satellite image interpretation
- Semi-autonomous decision-assistance systems for naval platforms (Kyriakidis, 2024)

#### **5.5.1 Cyber Espionage and Grey-Zone Threats**

One of the greatest challenges to NATO intelligence is cyber espionage, often conducted in the "grey zone" between war and peace. Greece, particularly after the "Predator" spyware scandal in 2022, has faced domestic and foreign cyber intrusions targeting high-ranking officials, journalists, and telecom providers (Deutsche Welle, 2022).

Greek authorities have since:

- Tightened oversight of lawful interception
- Strengthened cooperation with NATO's Cyber Rapid Reaction Teams (CRRTs)
- Proposed an EU framework on transparency in surveillance technologies

Greek security services have also flagged increasing efforts by Russian and Turkish intelligence actors to exploit diaspora networks, Orthodox Church relations, and social media ecosystems to conduct influence operations and strategic espionage (Nomikos, 2021).

#### **5.5.2 The Role of Emerging Technologies in NATO-Greece Synergy**

To maintain interoperability with NATO, Greece must continue developing expertise in:

- Quantum-resistant encryption
- Multi-intelligence fusion architecture (combining OSINT, SIGINT, GEOINT)
- NATO-compatible AI toolkits for dynamic threat analysis

Greece's participation in the NATO Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT) Roadmap and the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) innovation programs positions it well to co-shape intelligence futures (Blockmans & Crosson, 2021).

#### **5.5.3 Strategic Outlook and Recommendations**

##### **Institutional and Doctrinal Recommendations**

To remain a relevant actor within NATO's intelligence landscape, Greece should:

1. Institutionalize Joint Intelligence Doctrine: Develop a national doctrine that clearly defines joint intelligence operations across services (military, EYP, cyber units) and aligns with NATO and EU templates.
2. Create a Southeastern Europe Intelligence Hub: Athens could propose the establishment of a NATO-backed intelligence fusion node focused on the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean — a move that would leverage its geographic and strategic importance.
3. Invest in Human Capital: Modern intelligence operations rely on trained analysts who can fuse big data with strategic insight. Greece must prioritize education, multilingual OSINT capabilities, and military-academic collaboration.

#### 5.5.4 Regional and Multilateral Cooperation

Greece should continue enhancing its trilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives with:

- France (via the 2021 mutual defense clause)
- Israel and Cyprus (through naval exercises and joint intelligence task forces)
- Balkan states (on cyber, counter-disinformation, and critical infrastructure)

These partnerships are not an alternative to NATO, but a force multiplier within it.

#### 5.5.5 Balancing NATO and EU Intelligence Integration

Finally, Greece must strike a pragmatic balance between NATO's operational superiority and the EU's emerging intelligence autonomy:

- Advocate for interoperability standards across NATO and CSDP missions.
- Ensure Cyprus's absence from NATO does not derail intelligence cohesion in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- Contribute to an EU-wide intelligence training doctrine through **JEIS** (Joint EU Intelligence School).

Summarizing Greece is no longer a peripheral intelligence actor. It is a pivotal player at the intersection of NATO's strategic adaptation and the EU's ambition for autonomous security capacity. The modern Greek intelligence apparatus is learning to navigate hybrid threats, cyber warfare, AI-driven platforms, and regional rivalries — all while embedded within multiple multilateral frameworks.

The next decade will test whether Greece can continue adapting quickly enough to outpace evolving threats and solidify its status not only as a consumer but as a producer of high-quality strategic intelligence. With focused investment, institutional agility, and international cooperation, Greece is well-positioned to lead intelligence efforts in one of NATO's most geopolitically turbulent regions.

## 6. Conclusions & Future Implications

This manuscript has explored the complex, evolving interplay between NATO intelligence structures, Greek military strategy, and the shifting contours of European security. We traced how Greece transitioned from a Cold War peripheral actor to a

contemporary strategic hub for intelligence, surveillance, and hybrid security operations. Now, at a historic inflection point - between AI warfare, Russian revisionism, and NATO-EU rivalry - Greece must reimagine its intelligence identity.

This concluding chapter offers a comprehensive synthesis of the core findings, addresses the manuscript's fundamental research questions, and proposes strategic recommendations. It aims not only to close the narrative but to project the future - situating Greece at the center of NATO's evolving intelligence framework in an increasingly multipolar world.

### ➤ Summary of Core Findings. Greece's Strategic Evolution Within NATO Intelligence

Greece's entry into NATO in 1952 initiated a slow but persistent evolution in intelligence capability. Initially shaped by Cold War bipolarity and passive alignment, Greek military intelligence has since matured into a proactive actor embedded in NATO's Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR) and Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC). Chapter 1 outlined this arc - from post-junta democratization to post-9/11 transformations - and showed how external pressures (Turkey, Balkans, cyber threats) acted as key accelerants (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2017).

### ➤ Greece's Dual Commitments and Strategic Balancing

Greece has navigated a delicate balance between NATO obligations and EU strategic ambitions. This manuscript revealed that Greece is not simply torn between the two - it acts as a bridge. It contributes intelligence assets to EU INTCEN, FRONTEX, and PESCO initiatives, while fully interoperating with NATO's JISD and cyber coalitions (Blockmans & Crosson, 2021). Greece's dual role is not a contradiction; it is a strategic asset for transatlantic intelligence convergence.

### ➤ The New Frontiers: Cyber, AI, and Hybrid Warfare

The most profound transformation has been Greece's rapid integration into the digital battlespace. Chapter 4 detailed Greece's advancements in cyber defense, AI-based ISR systems, and counter-hybrid operations. Importantly, this development is not purely technological; it reflects a new doctrinal paradigm: Greece no longer sees intelligence as reactive - but as preemptive, predictive, and multidomain (National Cybersecurity Authority, 2020).

### ➤ Research Questions Revisited and Answered

#### RQ1: How has Greek military intelligence evolved within NATO since 1952?

Greek military intelligence has shifted from a peripheral adjunct to a central contributor in NATO's intelligence architecture. Through Cold War regional surveillance, post-junta restructuring, and post-9/11 counterterrorism integration, Greece matured its ISR, HUMINT, and SIGINT capacities. Today, with advanced satellite and maritime surveillance, Greece serves as NATO's southern eyes and ears, especially against Russian and Turkish activities in the Eastern Mediterranean (Tziarras, 2016).

#### RQ2: What are the main structural and operational challenges in Greece's intelligence integration with NATO and the EU?

Challenges include:

- Political rivalry with Turkey, which inhibits NATO-wide intelligence trust



- The Cyprus veto issue, blocking full NATO-EU intelligence convergence
- Interoperability limits, especially in AI and cyber systems Despite these obstacles, Greece mitigates friction through bilateral pacts (e.g., France, Israel) and flexible regional intelligence networks (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2017 ; Acikmese & Triantaphyllou, 2016).

### **RQ3: What role does Greece play in NATO intelligence in contemporary conflict zones such as Ukraine and the Balkans?**

Greece provides critical early-warning data on maritime traffic, Russian military logistics, and Balkan disinformation networks. Its air force supports NATO air policing in Romania and Bulgaria, while its naval bases serve as forward ISR nodes. Greece also supplies intelligence to counter Russian influence operations targeting Orthodox and Slavic populations in the Balkans (Polyakova & Meserole, 2019).

### **RQ4: How can Greece adapt to emerging intelligence threats, such as cyber warfare and AI-driven operations?**

Adaptation requires doctrinal modernization, institutional agility, and AI infrastructure investment. Greece has begun integrating AI in satellite reconnaissance, malware detection, and maritime threat prediction. Strategic alignment with NATO's AI Roadmap and CCDCOE is essential. Crucially, Greece must also develop indigenous ethics and sovereignty frameworks for AI warfare (Kyriakidis, 2024).

- **Policy Recommendations for Greek Military Intelligence**

#### **Establish a National Intelligence Innovation Command (NIIC)**

A unified, tri-service NIIC should oversee innovation, AI, quantum computing, and ISR integration. This body would bridge the gap between GEETHA, EYP, academia, and NATO bodies — enabling synergy across research, doctrine, and cyber operations.

#### ➤ **Create a Southeastern NATO Intelligence Hub**

Greece should propose the formation of a NATO Intelligence Coordination Hub for Southeastern Europe. Located in Athens or Thessaloniki, it could:

- Fuse Balkan maritime, cyber, and SIGINT analysis
- Operate alongside NATO's Naples hub
- Enhance visibility into Russian, Turkish, and irregular actor movements

#### ➤ **Invest in Strategic Human Capital**

Technology is only as effective as the analysts using it. Greece must:

- Expand scholarships for intelligence studies
- Establish a Joint Intelligence Academy
- Promote multilingual OSINT analysts and AI specialists

#### ➤ **Institutionalize Ethical AI Warfare Doctrine**

Greece should publish its own AI Ethics and Sovereignty Framework by 2026, outlining the permissible scope of machine-based surveillance, targeting, and data processing in NATO operations - setting a precedent for middle powers in AI security.

### ➤ **Greece's Future Role in NATO Intelligence and European Security**

#### **From Regional Contributor to Strategic Intelligence Actor**

Greece is well-positioned to transition from a reactive regional contributor to a proactive intelligence actor shaping NATO's southern strategies. It offers:

- Strategic geography
- Bilateral trust with NATO heavyweights
- Expertise in hybrid/maritime conflict zones

As Northern Europe focuses on the Arctic and Indo-Pacific, Greece will become even more vital to NATO's "South Hub" doctrine - monitoring instability in North Africa, the Levant, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

#### ➤ **Greece and the EU: Autonomy without Disruption**

While NATO remains Greece's primary military framework, Athens can help bridge EU-NATO intelligence rivalry by pushing for interoperability between INTCEN and the JISD. Greece must simultaneously:

- Support EU's Strategic Compass
- Oppose intelligence duplication
- Advocate for joint AI-defense research funding

#### ➤ **Strategic Outlook: The NATO-Greece Intelligence Horizon**

#### **AI-Driven Security Ecosystems**

By 2030, intelligence ecosystems will be dominated by AI, machine-led reconnaissance, and quantum-enhanced cryptography. Greece must:

- Embed AI ethics into NATO doctrine
- Lead PESCO projects on AI-enhanced battlefield awareness
- Develop cross-border AI regulatory norms (National Cybersecurity Authority, 2020).

#### ➤ **Cyber Threats and Space Surveillance**

Greece must transition from reactive cyber-defense to preemptive cyber-deterrence. Its next-gen defense posture should:

- Include orbital ISR (satellites for early warning)
- Invest in secure military clouds
- Expand drone swarms integrated with NATO C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance)

#### ➤ **Final Reflection: Greece as Vanguard, Not Observer**

The findings of this manuscript underscore one core insight: Greece must no longer view itself as a reactive node in NATO intelligence. Instead, it must become a strategic vanguard - crafting doctrine, shaping ethical debates, and anchoring intelligence in the most turbulent region of NATO's perimeter.

By institutionalizing innovation, embracing AI, and mediating NATO-EU friction, Greece can anchor itself as the intelligence epicenter of Southeastern Europe. The tools are in place. What remains is the political will, institutional alignment, and foresight to lead.

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