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REPATRIATION OF GREEK CHILDREN

Letter dated 27 June 1951 from the Permanent Representative of Greece  
to the United Nations addressed to the President  
of the General Assembly

New York, 27 June 1951.

With reference to the letter from the Representative of the Soviet Socialist Republics, circulated today as document A/1821 of 5 June 1951, I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's attention the following:

As you will recall in a previous communication, circulated as document A/1806 of 25 May 1951, the Soviet Representative had transmitted to you the texts of similar cables from "parents", "Greek Democratic Organizations" and the "Central Committee of Greek Refugees", whose whereabouts were, at that time, supposed to be in Bucharest. On 4 June 1951 I addressed to Your Excellency, under No. 3122, the answer that this communication called for. On the day after, however, that is 5 June, I took cognizance of the noble decision of the three-member Standing Committee, set up under resolution of the General Assembly of 1 December 1950, <sup>1/</sup> to undertake new efforts for the repatriation of the abducted Greek children, detained in Kominform countries. Wishing to facilitate, as much as I could, the Standing Committee in its arduous task so generously undertaken, I asked you to defer the release and circulation of my answer to Mr. Malik's communication, lest my reaction be construed as polemics which might hinder the Committee's endeavours.

I did so also in the hope that our forbearance might render the Representative of the Soviet Socialist Republics amenable to better thoughts in the interests of the Standing Committee's humanitarian work. As a matter of fact I anticipated that Mr. Malik would call a halt to the flow of propaganda, whatever its origin, from behind the Iron Curtain, by not transmitting and

<sup>1/</sup> Resolution 382 C (V).

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and commenting on "cables of protest" from the ~~very perpetrators~~ of the hideous crimes of abduction.

I sincerely regret that my sanguine expectations came to naught. Under the circumstances I believe that to leave Mr. Malik's polemical literature unanswered, far from assisting the honourable delegates from Sweden, Peru and the Philippines in their efforts, may place them under a handicap. That is the reason why I respectfully request Your Excellency to kindly cause this letter, together with my previous one, No. 3122 of 4 June 1951<sup>1/</sup>, to be circulated as General Assembly documents and to be distributed as such to the delegations accredited to the United Nations.

Needless to say that what I said in my letter of 4 June with regard to the cables from Bucharest, holds true also for the communications of Mr. Malik's correspondents from Budapest. "Parents", as well as "Greek Democratic Organizations" and "Central Committee of Greek Refugees" are made up of the same substance in both cases. So I leave refutation to the eloquence of the facts.

Availing myself of the present occasion, I should like to refer at the same time to another letter from the Soviet Representative which has been circulated as document A/1798 on 7 May 1951, as providing another striking evidence of the lip service Mr. Malik is paying to elementary truth by requesting the circulation, as General Assembly documents, of such baseless communications, thus shouldering a major part of responsibility. This letter referred to another group of children repatriated from Yugoslavia, among whom, so the letter ran, were Christos Dimou "whose parents Boris Alexandros and Velika are in the People's Democracies" without specification as to the country, and Symeon Trifonidis whose "mother Stephanía is also in the People's Democracies".

An exhaustive inquiry of the former's case has established the fact that not only has he not been repatriated, but that his repatriation has never been asked for by filing a request to this effect.

As to the case of Symeon Trifonidis, a formal request was presented by his father, John Trifonidis, residing in Greece, and vested with the paternal authority. This request was granted, after full examination by the representatives of the Red Cross organizations and the Yugoslav Red Cross. As for the child's mother, to whom reference is made in Mr. Malik's letter, she was forcibly

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<sup>1/</sup> See Annex.

abducted by communist guerillas. The honourable representative of the Soviet Union would, I think, render signal service to the cause of truth, which he is pretending to defend, if he tried to convince his Government to allow representatives of the Red Cross organizations to visit Stephania Trifonidis, somewhere in the People's Democracies, in order to ascertain her "free will".

I reiterate, Mr. President, my deep regret for Mr. Malik's insistence on engaging in polemics, in a question that the Greek Government and the Greek people, in full concordance with the General Assembly resolutions, consider as belonging exclusively to the humanitarian plane on which the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of the Red Cross organizations as well as of the Standing Committee are exerted.

(Signed) Alexis KYROU  
Permanent Representative of Greece  
to the United Nations

## ANNEX

Letter dated 4 June 1951 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

New York, 4 June 1951

On 22 May 1951, the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics saw fit to address to Your Excellency a letter transmitting the texts of "three telegrams, received from Bucharest, from parents of Greek children, from a number of Greek democratic organizations and from the Central Committee for Greek Refugees, energetically protesting against the forthcoming dispatch of 220 Greek children from Yugoslavia to Greece without their parents' consent". This letter, on Mr. Malik's request, has been circulated to all delegations to the United Nations as document A/1806 dated 25 May 1951.

As Your Excellency is aware, the United Nations have, since 1948, striven to put the question of the repatriation of the Greek children abducted by Communist guerillas in its true perspective. The relevant resolution of the fifth General Assembly echoes this effort, since it does recognize "that every possible effort should be made to restore the children to their homes, in a humanitarian spirit detached from political or ideological considerations".

Your Excellency is also aware of the response of the Kominform countries to ~~this~~ humanitarian approach. "Not a single Greek child" - as it is stated in the reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies and of the Secretary-General to the fifth General Assembly - "has yet been returned to his native land and, except for Yugoslavia, no country harbouring Greek children has taken definite action to comply with the resolutions unanimously adopted in two successive years by the General Assembly". No progress whatsoever, except in the case of Yugoslavia has been registered since then. What is more, the Kominform countries, in order to cover their negative attitude, are trying by transparent devices of a known pattern, to make propaganda capital out of a hideous crime which has afflicted thousands of Greek families, ~~aroused the~~ conscience of the civilized world and slurred the reputation, I am afraid, of our century.

The letter which the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet

/Socialist Republics

Socialist Republics addressed to you on 22 May 1951 should, I believe, have dispelled the last shred of doubt, if any existed, as to the real motives and intentions of the Kominform governments with regard to the question of the abducted Greek children. It is also interesting to note that the signers of the telegrams contained in this letter have, on different occasions, but always for the needs of the Communist cause, served as "Ministers" of a so-called "Popular Democratic Government of Greece" set up in some Kominform country with Soviet aid, as "Fighters for the Greek people" or as "Presidents" of non-existent organizations decorated with the much abused work "democratic". The "protests" of these modern Proteuses, who are but the very abductors of the Greek children, Mr. Malik saw expedient to endorse in his last letter.

This letter is also directed against a country which, after negotiations conducted under the auspices of the international Red Cross organizations, is now restoring abducted Greek children to their parents. The repatriation of these children is supervised by the agencies designated by the General Assembly, that is the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, which operate on the basis of thoroughly scrutinized demands submitted by the parents of the abducted children. Representatives of these agencies also supervise the actual restoration of the repatriated children to their parents.

In view of these easily ascertainable facts and in the face of the crude cynicism exhibited by the Kominform governments in their attempt to justify their flagrant violations of the Charter and the most elementary rules of international law, one is left confused and dismayed at their flouting of the accepted standards of international morality.

I leave this case, however, Sir, to the judgment of the Member States and I, therefore, have the honour to request the circulation of my letter, as a General Assembly document, to their delegations at the United Nations.

Alexis KYROU  
Permanent Representative of Greece  
to the United Nations

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