'At last, our voice is heard in the world': Greece and the Six Nation Initiative during the Euromissile Crisis

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Abstract

The emergence of the Second Cold War revived the nuclear arms race and triggered millions of demonstrators to take to the streets to protest against the looming nuclear threat. Most of the historiography has focused on these anti-nuclear rallies as well as the Cold War summits between Reagan and Gorbachev to deal with the Euromissiles escalation. This chapter will shed light on a completely neglected scheme called the 'Six Nation Initiative' launched by Greece along with India, Argentina, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden, in May 1984 to halt what they called 'a rush towards global suicide' and to facilitate an agreement on nuclear arms control. It will show how these six peripheral countries and Greece in particular had an impact on the discourse, framing and at times decisions on peace and disarmament, illustrating the margins for manoeuvre of small states and their potential influence on Cold War dynamics.

Keywords: Greece, Papandreou, Six Nation Initiative, nuclear arms race, disarmament, peace movements

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Introduction

As 1979 drew to its close, the future seemed ominous. Along with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the possible introduction of the Neutron bomb, NATO's 1979 'dual-track decision' not only aggravated the fear of 'limited nuclear war' in Europe, but significantly, dealt the *coup de grâce* to the spirit of superpower détente.[1] NATO's 'dual-track' decision of 12 December 1979 provided for the deployment of advanced, new generation long-range theatre nuclear forces – 108 Pershing II launchers and 464 Gryphon ground-launched cruise missiles – as a reaffirmation of the US security guarantee to NATO and a pressure mechanism for the Soviets to limit SS-20 missiles targeted towards Western Europe.[2] The mobilization against the deployment of US Pershing and Cruise missile atomic warheads was a watershed moment in the recent political history of Western Europe. In Great Britain, 400,000 people turned up at Hyde Park in October 1983 opposing missile deployment whilst the Federal Republic of Germany was swept up in anti-nuclear fervour, with more than 1 million joining the anti-missile demonstrations.[3] The same year, Rome, Madrid and Athens followed suit with thousands of citizens marching for peace, disarmament and freedom.[4]

Understanding the rising popularity of the peace message requires a thorough reading of global, regional and domestic political and cultural developments as well as high politics. There was a strong interplay between government, nuclear strategy and peace movement mobilization. The 1980s was a decade of revolution in world affairs moving from the resurgent antagonism of the Second Cold War to the peaceful resolution of 1989. Ronald Reagan entered the White House in 1981 as a tough talking anti-communist, denouncing the Soviet Union as an evil empire and launching an unprecedented defence build-up of American arsenal, only to finish up his second

term taking significant steps towards a nuclear free world. In this direction, his cooperation with General Secretary of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, was invaluable. The summits in Geneva, Reykjavik, and Washington ultimately led to the signature of the INF Treaty that saw the abolishing of intermediate-range nuclear forces.[5]

But it was not only the superpowers that attempted to defuse nuclear tensions and launch a policy of peace. Greece along with India, Argentina, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden, launched the 'Six Nation Initiative' in May 1984 to halt what they called 'a rush towards global suicide' and to facilitate an agreement on nuclear arms control. This chapter will shed light on this completely neglected initiative that brought together such a diverse group of countries in an effort to transcend Cold War boundaries and touch upon a policy issue of the nuclear arms race that used to be exclusively confined to the superpowers or the five nuclear countries of the time.

Examining this initiative will allow us to explore how small powers such as Greece were able to exert influence on the state of international relations and unveil a strategy that albeit serving domestic nationalistic purposes, spoke to international concerns of nuclear proliferation. It also unearths how the fear of nuclear devastation and the call for disarmament rose in popularity in the 1980s and formed a central part of peace mobilisation but also high-level policy activity. The concepts for peace and disarmament were historically and culturally bounded, therefore looking at the Initiative of the Six will allows us to see how the smaller countries involved, made sense of these concepts and how they communicated them to their people and fellow policymakers in order to speak to a diverse set of national, social, political and religious backgrounds. Original material from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Reagan Library, the CIA and Mitterrand, as well as the Andreas Papandreou Foundation archives along with international and domestic press will illustrate the international and national developments that influenced Greece's peace policy and its role in the Initiative of the Six in the first half of the 1980s. Most importantly, it will show how these six peripheral countries and Greece in particular had an impact on the discourse, framing and at times decisions on peace and disarmament, illustrating the margins for manoeuvre of small states and their potential influence on Cold War dynamics.

Greece and the policy of peace

Despite its peripheral status, Greece and its leader Andreas Papandreou were able to earn the reputation of the peacemaker or for some of his allies the brand of the troublemaker during the Euromissile crisis of the 1980s.[6] It is important to understand the political background against the

rising popularity of the message of peace in Greece. It is inextricably linked to the changing political context that brought Andreas Papandreou's socialist party of PASOK to power.

The October 1981 elections saw the rise to power of Greece's first socialist government, a radical break with the past, pointing to a period of change in domestic and especially foreign policy.[7] PASOK won with an overwhelming majority on a nationalistic and socialistic agenda, declaring Greece a victim of the imperialist design of the West in the form of NATO and the EEC. In foreign policy, PASOK stood at first for non-alignment based on hostility to Turkey, distrust of the USA, rejection of Greece's identification with the West and closer links with the Arab world and Greece's northern neighbours in the Balkans. Papandreou also fully supported and for some time became the poster child for the anti-nuclear movement in Greece. As he got closer to power he moderated his message and in private he was much more forward in keeping Greece within the western alliance.[8] Papandreou's underlying hostility to NATO and the EEC was tempered by a realistic appraisal of where Greece's real interests lay.

Indeed, in the aftermath of PASOK's landslide victory, the new prime minister and his government were faced with the harsh reality of geopolitics. The populist and nationalist rhetoric during the electoral period had significantly nurtured anti-American sentiment for the majority of the Greek people, but Papandreou and his ministers were well aware that Greece could afford neither to withdraw from NATO nor to break its relations with the US. The Turkish threat loomed large in the Greek public imagination and dictated the foreign policy direction while committing considerable resources to defence. Papandreou had repeatedly made clear that Ankara was viewed as the main foe: 'We really have a unique problem in Greece, which really you do not meet in any other country member of the alliance. We sense a threat from an ally on our east, Turkey. One of the major problems in Greek defence the last seven years has been preparation of defence in case Turkey, beyond words, decided to actually make good on its claims'.[9] According to Mitterrand's advisor Jean-Michel Gaillard: 'more than ever, the actions of neighbor Turkey in the region determines the foreign policy of Greece. Devoting 6.7% of its GDP to its defense, it cannot go further or face north and east simultaneously ... So Mr. Papandreou remained in NATO and signed an agreement providing for maintenance of American bases for a minimum five years against a "rent" of $ 500 million year per annum to purchase US military equipment'.[10]

Several months after their victory in the polls, the Socialists' credentials were questioned, especially in the realm of foreign policy. The country's terms of membership to NATO and the EEC had remained unchanged, despite proclamations to the contrary, and negotiations over the American bases had produced the opposite result to the one promised during the elections. Papandreou's simultaneous active support for the anti-nuclear movement both in Greece and

abroad was – among other things – a means to satisfy the anti-American feelings of the Greek public and its desire for national independence in a way that would not shatter the delicate Greek-Turkish regional balance. Papandreou's peace initiatives and his government's heavy involvement in the peace mobilisation could bolster his country's independent stance and his own popularity without posing a danger to the country's security.[11] Indeed, by embracing the anti-nuclear movement, he could score domestic and foreign policy goals: he could mollify the Greek Communist Party (KKE) in opposing US "aggressiveness". While PASOK had firmly established itself as the hegemonic party of the Left, there were concerns about KKE's growing influence. As the British embassy was reporting from Athens: 'two factors have been brewing since 1981 that could help the KKE increase its influence: Firstly, the climate of openness to the Soviet Union makes the party look more respectable and the disappointment at PASOK's lack of progress in implementing change and at time going off with pre-electoral commitments'.[12] Outbursts of ultra-nationalism, dominant in the peace discourse, mobilized public opinion, silenced left-wing critics within this party, and appeased the KKE.[13]

But there were not only domestic concerns at play. Papandreou's aim was to put Greece on the map internationally by playing the troublemaker. His obstructionist acts, famously known as the 'policy of footnote', such as the close ties with radical Arab states and the refusal to condemn the Soviet Union for the Polish crisis, were extremely popular at home.[14] Indeed, in the central committee of PASOK that met for the first time since the elections on 27 March 1982, Papandreou stroke a celebratory tone, taking every opportunity to emphasize Greece's independent voice. He made a virtue out of the negative stance in NATO and European Political Cooperation (EPC) consultations. He cited as another success the Greek refusal to accept sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union arguing that it was comical for a small country to impose an embargo against a superpower. Moreover, for him, the whole affair was cynical: 'We in Greece, had seven years' dictatorship and no one neither Washington, or Bonn, or London set out to condemn the dictatorship by imposing sanctions. And how can you persuade the Greeks that sanctions are truly imposed because of the violation of democratic institutions, when next to us in Turkey in which what is taking place is literally genocide'.[15] With one statement, Papandreou was playing to all the demands of the peace movements for national independence, a stronger stance in international affairs, the promotion of democracy and the fight against nuclear armaments.

On 18 August 1983, the Greek government disclosed, in a letter to NATO members, the country's concerns about the deployments of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles and suggested that deployments be suspended for a six-month period 'in order to give the Geneva negotiations the breathing space they certainly need'.[16] While worried about the growing isolation

of Greece from the line of the western institutions, the Western partners downplayed the possible impact of such an action. The troublemaking may have been gratifying to the Soviets but the maverick behaviour of Greece was not posing such a serious threat as the actions of the FRG or the Netherlands which would end up hosting the Euromissiles.[17] That did not discourage the Greek Prime Minister. Intent upon emphasizing the role of Greece as master of its own destiny, not to be taken for granted by anyone, in September 1983, Greece vetoed a collective strong EEC condemnation of the Soviet Union for the accidental shooting down of a South Korean airliner. Defending his country's position, Papandreou proclaimed: 'We, like other countries, are entitled to our own foreign policy, which is shaped by our own interests. We're partners in the Community but are not obliged to accept the views of others. In the matter of the airliner, we were concerned by the general hysteria. As things stand now, it is clear that the Soviet Union did not know it was a passenger plane. The Russians can't say so, because that would be an indication that their reconnaissance system is very weak. Political cooperation within the EEC', he went on, 'was a voluntary activity, in which there is no unanimity'.[18]

The intensification of Cold War tensions in the 1980s had nurtured division not only between East and West but also within the Atlantic alliance over the best strategy forward, most importantly within individual member states. A handful of countries like Denmark and especially Greece struggled with maintaining a balance between 'alliance solidarity and political autonomy', posing a major challenge to the Western alliance.[19] Besides differentiating their stand or using dissent as a political instrument – even if it was inconsequential – these peripheral countries reframed and reconfigured the Cold War narrative, emphasizing much more their own national needs and resorting to local vernaculars to bring their message home. Despite his rhetorical tone of dissent and several obstructionist policies that did challenge the prestige and cohesion of NATO and EEC strategy, Papandreou during the period in question remained in NATO, renewed the agreement on American bases for five years and quietly dropped the issue of unilateral removal of US nuclear war heads from Greece. No matter how irritating his initiatives might appear to the West, he was able to project himself and his country as sincere advocates of peace and as independent actors, without essentially risking an actual confrontation with his NATO allies. For the Greek people, defence of national independence, relaxing foreign strings and rejecting the Cold War straightjacket was the absolute guarantee for peace and the only popular and legitimate way forward for the country.

The Initiative of the Six

Several prominent leaders from around the globe and peace activists across Europe who shared his views endorsed Papandreou's policy of peace, despite its strong domestic angle and deep nationalistic tone, and the headache it was creating in several Western capitals.[20] Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau for instance, had launched his own high level peace initiative aimed to revive arms control negotiations during the same period.[21] Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme had publicly supported Greece's initiative for a Balkan nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) and the two prime ministers complimented each other in speeches on 22 August 1983, when Palme visited Athens. Palme and Papandreou, who had developed strong personal ties, were in full agreement on the urgent need 'to intervene since the two superpowers already have a nuclear arsenal, capable of destroying one another more than fifty times'.[22] The two countries were on the same page on several issues. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that on 22 May 1984, Andreas Papandreou joined five other heads of state and government – India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, Mexico's President Miguel de la Madrid, Argentina's President Raul Alfonsin and President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere – to launch the 'Six-Nation Initiative' for Peace and Disarmament.[23] Explaining Greece's role in such a global initiative, Papandreou noted: 'I believe that the prevention of nuclear war is not an issue that concerns only superpowers. It is of direct concern to all of us since it threatens our lives'.[24]

The idea was originally promoted in mid-1983 by the Parliamentarians for World Order (PWO).[25] PWO was an international network of more than 600 legislators in 33 countries, created in 1980 with a unique access to every level of political system, from the upper echelons of government down to the grassroots, able to coordinate simultaneous legislative action on a global scale. PWO, with an international secretariat in New York and funded by foundations, corporations and national parliaments, was committed to working together on the twin fronts of disarmament and development. The 1970s was proclaimed by the United Nations as the decade of disarmament – yet, although some steps were taken to succeed towards that goal with the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT) agreements, in the early 1980s the arms race competition was again on the rise with worsening relations between the two superpowers.[26] From the 370 billion dollars spent on armaments in 1970, an astonishing increase to 500 billion dollars had been reached by 1980; 43 percent of which was nuclear armament of NATO, 27 percent for the Warsaw Pact, 15 percent for the Third World, 10 percent for China and 5 percent for the remaining countries.[27] As Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a founding member of the Six Nation Initiative, stated, there was an 'organic link between armament expenditure and economic reconstruction. A token reduction in armament expenditure and its diversion to economic assistance to developing countries would produce dramatic results'.[28] The wasteful

diversion of capital, trained manpower and natural resources to the arms race undercut all attempts to fight poverty and promote development throughout the world. The PWO felt that in the early 1980s, the political climate had changed, with the movement for peace gaining rapidly in power and momentum. Ordinary people in many countries were crying out to their governments for action towards peace. Given that all nations were equally at risk from a nuclear war, many felt it was irresponsible just to leave it in the hands of the two countries who were largely responsible for creating it.

Many parliamentarians rooted for a bold new initiative that would break the deadlock on disarmament and capture the public imagination that already was experiencing angst about the possibility of nuclear holocaust.[29] Among the parliamentarians who participated behind the scenes for the launch of the Six Nation Initiative were Olafur Grimsson, MP from Iceland, Douglas Roche, MP from Canada and John Silkin, MP from the UK. Starting in mid-1983, they met with a select group of government leaders in order to discuss proposals for joint action. In complete secrecy, the officers for PWO travelled the globe, carrying drafts and opinion papers and consulting with each of the leaders. At the same time, the heads of government were in direct contact with each other to exchange ideas on the possible form of action. When approaching the leaders of the six nations, the people of PWO underlined the important role that small countries could play in the Cold War dynamics, working towards a possible breakthrough on the issue of disarmament. It is telling that initially the scheme was called the 'The Middle Power Initiative'.[30] In a letter to Andreas Papandreou, Nicholas Dunlop, General secretary of the PWO stated:

> [W]e come to you because you share our concerns. We believe that an initiative by the heads of government would have a tremendous impact both on arms negotiations and the public opinion. A creative, dynamic role by middle power leaders in the negotiating process would help to cut through the reefs of mutual suspicion and antagonism which so often paralyse the superpower negotiations today. Perhaps most important of all, your efforts would provide a rallying point for those millions of ordinary people around the world who look on with horror at the mounting preparations for nuclear war and who feel totally helpless to influence the seemingly endless and unproductive negotiations between the USA and USSR.[31]

Indeed, the Parliamentarians felt that the Initiative of the Six would create a third organised political force between West and East, effective enough to partake in the discussion on the arms race. Because nuclear disarmament was not chiefly a technical problem but a political one, it required political experience and understanding that the members of the initiative had in abundance. As Professor Roger Fisher, head of the Harvard Negotiations project, founded in 1979, noted, 'what is unique about this initiative is not just the content of the proposals but the

process of which they are a part. It's already a success because it is changing the structure of the nuclear debate'.[32] It was the first time that non-nuclear states were collectively acting at the highest level in a field long considered the exclusive domain of the nuclear powers.

Leaders like Indira Gandhi understood that it was vital to 'bring a sense of urgency. Everybody's talking about nuclear war as [though] it is just another problem. It isn't. It is the crucial problem of today'.[33] President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere proclaimed that 'those of us who have been involved in the Six Nation Peace Initiative were each approached by the Parliamentarians for World Order as individuals known to be personally concerned to promote nuclear disarmament. I believe that the fact that all six leaders are heads of government has helped our efforts to get greater publicity'.[34] It was a kind of Contadora group for disarmament but on a worldwide scale with the geographical diversity becoming one of the scheme's strengths.[35] Moreover, three of the involved countries, Argentina, India and Sweden, were technologically capable of building nuclear arms, so that the effort could not just be dismissed as a protest of the powerless.[36] A number of considerations led the Parliamentarians to propose the idea to Andreas Papandreou. 'Greece is a NATO ally', US congressmen and PWO member Thomas Downey admitted in an interview. 'Papandreou has close ties to other Americans, not in the Administration; he has a working relationship with the Soviet Union and his initiatives for a nuclear free Balkans and for a delay in the deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles separate him from your typical European leader'.[37]

The Six Nation Peace Initiative issued a declaration in May 1984 and handed it to the UN secretary-general Javier Perez De Cuellar, who characterised the initiative as a reinforcement of his own effort and that of the UN to promote some agreement on control of nuclear armaments. The declaration called on states with nuclear weapons – the Soviet Union, USA, China, Great Britain, and France – to halt what the document called 'a rush towards global suicide' and to facilitate an agreement on nuclear arms control. It urged the five nuclear powers 'to stop testing, production, and deployment of weapons of mass destruction and to undertake substantial reductions in nuclear forces.' It concluded that 'progress in disarmament can only be achieved with an informed public applying strong pressure on governments.'[38]

The statement attracted broad attention in the media and national parliaments in Western Europe. Even Pope John Paul II offered his encouragement for this initiative in May 1984, and a large number of peace organizations endorsed it.[39] Prime Minister Gonzalez of Spain, Trudeau of Canada and Sorsa of Finland added their support.[40] The Secretary general of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Bruce Kent, called it the most significant move in the peace issue

in the last 25 years, and stressed the importance of the fact that the six leaders did not limit themselves to just a declaration but were determined to proceed with concrete proposal for nuclear disarmament. However, there was not much political bandwidth within the club of the Western nuclear powers. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher showed a clear lack of enthusiasm and added that her government desired a reduction of armaments, but on the condition that reduction was simultaneous on all sides, and ensured military balance. She went on to add, 'this is a more urgent and worthwhile task than freezes or bans which cannot be sure of being able to verify and which would therefore not increase mutual confidence.' [41] The Americans and French were dismissive of the appeal, with the latter objecting to the freezing of nuclear testing and doubting that the Six possessed the necessary mediums to check nuclear testing.[42]

The Western alliance deemed it troublesome, and even hypocritical, that three countries out of the Six, namely Argentina, Tanzania and India, had not signed the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1968, that entered into force in 1970 and sought to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology. India had refused to sign the treaty on the grounds that it was a biased legal instrument that divided the world into 'nuclear haves' and 'nuclear have nots''.[43] New Delhi criticized the treaty for aiming to prevent proliferation at the 'horizontal level' while 'the nuclear powers not only won't give up the production of atomic weapons, but would not even undertake to cease the production of those weapons [...] in the future'. India moved even one step further invoking 'the psychological effects of the Chinese nuclear program' as justification for not wanting to 'give up the option of nuclear weapons if the NPT is not a step towards total nuclear disarmament by all nations'. [44] A representative of India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that 'this treaty […] creates discriminatory conditions for its aims at disarming the unarmed', while President Nyerere admitted that Tanzania was not in a position to build nuclear weapons. On the other side, the Soviets published a statement pointing out that the declaration was in the same direction as Soviet proposals for a nuclear freeze. The Soviet newspaper *Pravda* noted that the Six leaders represented one fifth of the population of the globe from diverse parts of the world, and that their gesture was therefore 'exceptionally symbolical', reflecting the opinion of the majority of the humanity.[45]

Greece was the only NATO country to sign the declaration, and Papandreou justified that by stating that 'NATO is a democracy and we have the right to disagree with some of the over-all initiatives'.[46] Papandreou launched an attack on the US, claiming that it was 'Reagan's emotional desire to regain the military superiority which America had possessed before détente which lay behind the current arms spiral […] while in the Soviet Union there was a deep-rooted fear of a holocaust'.[47]

After his mother's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi continued to promote the initiative and made his debut as an international political leader by hosting a further meeting of representatives of the six countries in January 1985 in India. The conference issued a communiqué – the Delhi Declaration – which called for an immediate ban on testing nuclear weapons and a halt to their development, especially of space weapons.[48] It was a manifesto for peace, where the Six proposed suspension of all nuclear tests for a period of 12 months, that could be extended or made permanent. They did acknowledge that 'the problems of verifying the suspension would be difficult but not insurmountable'. In fact, they proposed measures to facilitate the establishment of effective verification arrangements: 'Third party verification- on our territories- could provide a high degree of certainty that the testing programmes have ceased'.[49]

The leaders of the six countries offered to undertake the task of verifying such a test ban, in an effort to remove doubts about compliance and possible violations.[50] The Soviets appreciated their efforts but insisted on the simpler measure of the declaration of a moratorium that would not allow any kind of nuclear testing; the Soviet Union had unilaterally halted nuclear testing on 6 August 1985 and had called upon the American government to follow suit.[51] Such a message, with this emphasis on a theme already trailed by Gorbachev, came at a good time for him in his approach to Geneva. It should offer a useful opportunity to reinforce his image of reasonableness, and the apparent unwillingness of the Americans to respond to international demands for an end to nuclear testing.[52] In the run up to the next round of Soviet-American talks, the British Foreign Office thought that the 'Soviets are likely to attach importance to any initiatives that give further support to their own positions, especially if one of those behind any such initiative is member of NATO'.[53]

Following the New Delhi meeting, three of the leaders – Alfonsin, Nyerere and Palme – flew to Athens to attend a meeting on 31 January 1985, hosted by Papandreou with some 50 leaders of non-governmental organizations as well as prominent legislators and personalities, anti-nuclear campaigners and intellectuals supporting the Six Nation Initiative. Prominent former prime ministers and other politicians were present, such as Edgar Faure, Pierre Trudeau, Joop den Uyl, Bruno Kreisky, Egon Bahr, as well as Venezuela's former president Carlos Andres Perez. Intellectual figures, like economist John Kenneth Galbraith, and the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadruddin Aga Khan, also attended, while Willy Brandt and the Greek poets Yannis Ritsos and Nobel prize winner Odysseas Elytis gave their full support.[54] International media lauded the gathering in Athens for the impressive participation of personalities. This was no accident, as Papandreou was eager to further reinforce his global appeal as the politician of disarmament and his country at the forefront of the politics of peace that had

gained such prominence during that period. His main train of thought seems to have been that even a small country could and should follow an active foreign policy away from the ubiquitous Cold War exigencies, no matter how unpleasant it could be for its allies. Papandreou wanted in Athens to promote 'a crusade for peace' that started in New Delhi, and observed that 'the battle of the streets has become the battle of the governments'.[55]

The Six were quick to defend themselves against charges of making an empty gesture. They saw the Delhi declaration as a rallying point for an international movement embracing governments, parliaments and peace groups.[56] Gandhi claimed that 'we are defending ourselves by building up public opinion'. President Nyerere claimed to speak for the Third world when he condemned 'the iniquity of using such a large proportion of national and world resources on nuclear weapons and other sophisticated instruments of death' and reminded the advanced countries that 'our priority of action makes nonsense of that struggle against world poverty and destitution to which we regularly recommit ourselves'.[57]

The New Delhi and Athens meetings therefore were bold in their conception, looking to change the politics of nuclear disarmament. Their biggest advantage was that they came at a critical point of time as two months later, the world attention would focus on the Geneva nuclear arms control talks. The whole point of the Athens initiative was to break down the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear powers.[58] The key to achieving a breakthrough of the resistance of the nuclear powers lay in the mobilisation of civil society. In Athens, there was the hope that the leaders of NGO's and influential private individuals would further activate public opinion in their respective constituencies and bring pressure to the superpowers to negotiate seriously, as the Cold War narrative that had justified a nuclear arms race was losing legitimacy amongst an increasing number of civilians. However, worries about the next steps persisted, especially the fear that unless new initiatives were taken and unless someone of the Six demonstrated a strong sense of leadership, the initiative would atrophy and come to nought. As emphasized by American peace and human rights activist Stanley Sheinbaum in a letter to the Greek Prime Minister, 'in the nuclear game, so to speak, "we" do not have many chips, but you all have created one here that has enormous potential in it. You have already carved out the nuclear issue as one of which you are making a stand.'[59]

The six leaders pledged to convey the Initiative's message to the two superpowers and the other three nuclear powers (the UK, France and China) and soon Papandreou had the opportunity to put forward the cause of nuclear disarmament during his subsequent talks with the Soviet and Chinese leaderships.[60] Moreover, during an official visit to Sofia in July 1985, the Greek prime

minister declared that 'small non-nuclear states have not only a right but a duty to participate in the struggle to promote détente and to prevent the militarization of space'.[61] During 1986, the Six Nation Initiative continued to call for the halt to all nuclear testing and the development of new nuclear weapons. The Group of Six held its second meeting in Ixtapa, Mexico, on 6 August 1986 and reiterated its plea for a ban on nuclear testing and the abolishment of the SDI/Star Wars space defence project, to be followed by the conclusion of a US–Soviet arms reduction treaty. It also repeated its readiness to offer its good services to verify compliance, when a US–Soviet test ban treaty was eventually signed.[62] Leaders of the Six would underwrite the cost of the verification plan, establish monitoring stations in both countries and provide personnel to operate it. PM Rajiv Gandhi of India noted that 'our geographical reach, technological competence and independence of bloc rivalries should command acceptance'.[63] The search for practical measures had led to a focus on observation and verification. The Six were aware they could not force the hand of the USA and Soviet Union to reach any agreements but were bent on making it harder to refuse the verification process or the option of a global peace alert system.[64]

The next summit took place in Stockholm on 21–22 January 1987, several months before the leaders of the USA and Soviet Union would meet in Washington to sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which was to abolish a whole category of fully operational nuclear weapons and for the first time led to the reduction of nuclear arsenals. At the time, the Six claimed to have played a crucial role in that upcoming breakthrough in nuclear disarmament mostly by influencing world public opinion and making its demands felt. It is true that, when the Initiative took off in 1984, the dialogue between the leading powers was almost silent. Moreover, they felt that the 1987 signing of the treaty, despite its crucial importance, was not enough. Pressure should continue for further disarmament and it was vital to continue to voice the concerns of the citizens of the non-nuclear nationals over the threat of nuclear war.

Conclusions

Despite the public proclamation of success, it is quite a stretch to causally link the Initiative of the Six with the breakthrough in the second nuclear age of the 1980s. However, examining this initiative along with Greece's role in it, offers a window in a broader trend of international affairs during the Euromissile crisis that has been ignored in the literature. Instead of solely focusing on peace movements and their impact on policymaking, or the superpowers and their ongoing negotiations on disarmament, looking at these high-level peace schemes offers an alternative history of the Second Cold War. It showcases how different governments in peripheral states

responded to the anxieties of worsening Cold War relations, the diffusion of technologies that made proliferation harder to stop, and the concerns of everyday citizens about a fear of a nuclear war.

Quite rightly, there was widespread agreement that the initiative faced enormous odds. The challenge for the Six Nation Initiative could not be denied as the Six were aiming to mobilise public opinion around a policy issue that was, for the most part, inaccessible to public preview, even at times within the parliamentary sphere. The details of the arms race and defence were discussed behind closed doors and within the defence establishment at a national and global level. It is within this context that one must assess the progress and success of such initiatives. The Initiative of the Six was a success for its inspirers as it fulfilled their three main goals: to run a fair, informed, and objective public information campaign for parliamentarians around the world and their respective executives; to educate the world public opinion about the state of the global arms race; and to simultaneously address three different audiences which tended to exclude each other, namely the nuclear powers, the peace movements and independent scientists. Each of the nuclear powers presented their own point of view and sometimes concealed information from the public. Peace movements lacked the necessary scientific expertise to track and analyse the armaments, and the scientists, who could provide the relevant information, were treated with scepticism by the public.

In contrast to the peace movements, the advantage of having heads of states on board meant that they were considered not just visionaries but doers and pragmatic as well.[65] It cannot be denied that the six countries took an increasingly visible role in the nuclear disarmament issue since they first appeared in 1984. 'Traditionally, nuclear disarmament issues have been a spectator sport for the nonnuclear countries' said Olafur Raganr Grimsson of Iceland, the president of PWO. However, '…with this initiative the nonnuclear countries for the first time are taking a role in the arms control process.'[66]

The benefit of studying the Initiative of the Six speaks to several scholars' call to bring into a fruitful conversation the global history of transnational and international advocacy groups with the state based story of non-proliferation for a better coverage of nuclear history.[67] Moreover, the tale of the Six and Greece's prominent role showcases that despite the peace movement's sceptical view of political leaders, there were key players 'who succeeded in developing particularly high profiles with regard to certain issues' of peace and disarmament, even if they were from a small country.[68] Papandreou proved to be such a protagonist and reached celebrity status for the cause of peace. The Greek Prime Minister capitalized on the Initiative to wield personal influence as a regional or even global peacemaker and mediator and enhance Greece's prestige – especially in the

Third World. Papandreou felt that his country's participation as a NATO country in this scheme was a nuisance to his Western allies. But he preferred to be known as a troublemaker than being ignored. This was extremely useful at a time when Papandreou was forced – in the face of the looming Turkish threat – to drop the electoral pledges to leave NATO and the EEC and to remove the US bases from Greece. Peace projects, such as the Initiative of the Six, not only had transnational links but their global appeal was important to infuse a sense of pride to a small historically dependent country. It did not matter if it yielded any concrete objective benefits for the country as the fervent rhetoric that accompanied these moves was offering its own texture of reality. The strength of his peace message embraced and reproduced a particular worldview, contributing to the delegitimization of the Cold War division while legitimising the constant quest for national independence and pride. In other words, small countries like Greece were able to transcend the Cold War rigidities, pursue at times an autonomous policy from their respective alliances and play a role in issues that proved of a global concern, thus stretching the country's margin of manoeuvre.

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[12] The National Archives, Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO), Letter by Llewellyn-Smith to Wilson, Athens, 28 January 1983, FCO 9/4039.

[13] *The New York Times*, 24 January 1982.

[14] FCO 9/3516, Diplomatic Report by Sutherland to FCO, Athens, 1 April 1982; Effie Pedaliu, '"Footnotes" as an Expression of Distrust? The United States and the NATO "Flanks" in the Last Two Decades of the Cold War,' in: Martin Klimke et al. (eds), *Trust, but Verify: The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969–1991* (Washington D.C. and Stanford, CA 2016), 237–258; 'Policy of footnote' during the 1980s referred to the Greek and Danish practices of regularly inserting their objections and reservations in official NATO and EEC declarations.

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[16] FCO 9/4080, Telegram from Secretary of State to all NATO capitals, Washington, 22 August 1983.

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[21] Luc-Andre Brunet, 'Unhelpful Fixer? Canada, the Euromissile Crisis, and Pierre Trudeau's Peace Initiative, 1983-1984", The International History Review, DOI: 10.1080/07075332.2018.1472623; Susan Colbourn, 'Cruising toward nuclear danger': Canadian anti-nuclear activism, Pierre Trudeau's peace mission, and the transatlantic partnership, *Cold War Histor*y, 18:1 (2018) 19–36.
[22] Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE) 5257, Blanc to Quai d'Orsay, Stockholm, 26 October 1984.
[23] *Exormisi*, 26/27 May 1984.
[24] European Nuclear Disarmament, LSE archives (END)/19/16, The Four Continent Peace Initiative, 22 May 1984.
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[28] END/19/16, The Four Continent Peace Initiative, 22 May 1984.
[29] APF, box 10, Letter by PWO, Relus Ter Beek, Chairman, Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Parliament of Netherlands, to Andreas Papandreou, New York, 22 June 1983.
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[34] APF, box 97 Letter by Julius Nyerere to Andreas Papandreou, 26 November 1985.
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