

Marco Rubio's visit to Athens integrates Greece deeper into US imperialism's war strategy

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The conservative New Democracy (ND) government in Athens is integrating Greece ever more deeply into Washington's drive to war from the Eastern Mediterranean to Iran and Ukraine.

Greece's critical geopolitical position is being placed at the disposal of the US military and NATO, tens of billions of euros are being committed to rearmament, and its energy policy is being aligned with the strategic interests of US imperialism—at a staggering social cost to workers and youth.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Athens on October 6–7 and held talks with Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. The talks centred on binding Greece more closely to Washington's war strategy in the region in an effort to dominate its energy resources and trade routes.

A joint statement released by Gerapetritis and Rubio after their October 7 meeting announced a \$4 billion arms package including munitions and upgrades for Greece's F-16 and F-35 fighter jets.

The statement announced the “Vertical Gas Corridor” initiative that aims to turn Greece into a regional hub for US gas. US energy firms ExxonMobil and Chevron are set to profit from hydrocarbon exploration in the Ionian Sea and south of Crete.

Rubio's visit was overshadowed by earlier reports on the conduct of US Ambassador to Greece Kimberly Guilfoyle, who was lobbying governments on behalf of Aktor Group, one of the main Greek companies involved in “Vertical Gas Corridor” deals. She offered a rich US donor access to President Donald Trump if he paid off a \$100,000 credit card bill.

In an exchange with Greece's energy minister, while referring to the collapse of the government in Romania, Guilfoyle belligerently said, “We can do that to any country we want. We can do that here.” After initial dithering over whether Guilfoyle's position was untenable, the Trump

administration forced her resignation on October 13. On the calculations behind her resignation, an unnamed Republican operative told *Politico* that “the craziness and the corruption was too blatant and Greece too important.”

The US military base in Souda Bay in Crete has for decades served US imperialism as a key logistics and transit hub. It is now being used in the war against Iran, while the US base in Alexandroupoli in northeastern Greece—a combined military base and natural gas facility—plays a similar role in NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine.

Over the next 12 years Greece plans to spend €25 billion in the largest modernisation of its armed forces in history. The flagship is the \$3.5 billion Achilles Shield—an anti-aircraft and anti-drone dome—which will be developed in partnership with Israel. In a press conference, Rubio praised Greece for being on track to spend 5 percent of GDP on its military and related infrastructure by 2035.

While billions of euros are squandered on war and energy deals, the Greek working class is still reeling from austerity implemented by successive governments during the last decade at the behest of the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund.

In 2024, public health spending stood at just over €12 billion, more than a fifth lower than in 2009, while average full-time earnings were €18,000, less than half the EU average, and the minimum wage is a paltry €920 a month.

According to Eurostat figures last month, 87.1 percent of people in Greece struggled to make ends meet—the highest in the EU and more than double the EU average of 42.5 percent.

The centrepiece of Rubio's visit was his address at the Pnyx on the evening of October 7—the site of the sovereign assembly of citizens in ancient Athens. There was nothing democratic about Rubio's speech. Attendance was by invitation only, limited to a handful of politicians, foreign diplomats and businesspeople, with snipers employed on elevated positions around the site. A 24-hour ban on outdoor

gatherings applied across central Athens, with 3,000 police deployed and surveillance drones overhead.

Rubio's speech rehashed the fascistic themes he set out in Munich on February 14, centring on the myth of Western "superiority" while invoking the "great man" narrative of history.

Rubio used the word "democracy" only twice—paying lip service to ancient Athens's political system—before revealing that it was not the democratic traditions of the Athenian city state that he valued. Rather, it was "qualities" that "ran far, far deeper" that "can't be reduced to any particular political system or theory."

Chief among these qualities, according to Rubio, is the ancient Greek concept of "thumos"—the part of a person that feels anger, pride, courage and indignation—without which "nations lose their will to fight, the will to strive, the will to survive."

Ignoring the fact that ancient Greek philosophers cautioned that "thumos" should be subordinate to "logos" or reason, Rubio laid bare the Trump administration's naked imperialist agenda: "Under President Trump, the United States has made its choice. We choose the unapologetic pursuit of national power: to take back control of our critical supply chains, to reindustrialize our economy, to rebuild our defense, to fight for dominance of the technologies and industries of the future."

Rubio's visit came amid rising tensions between Greece and Türkiye, also a NATO member, with both nations lining up behind US imperialism's aims.

The historic rivalry between the Greek and Turkish bourgeoisie over the Aegean and Cyprus has sharpened since the discovery of gas reserves in the region, with the countries coming close to war in the summer of 2020.

Plans for the "Great Sea Interconnector" cable to connect Cyprus's electricity to the rest of Europe have stalled after Türkiye objected that the cable would cross into waters off Crete that both countries claim. Anxious to keep US imperialism's flank in the Eastern Mediterranean intact, Rubio refused to be publicly drawn into the dispute, saying it is "best handled through private diplomacy, outside the setting of press conferences."

Alexis Tsipras led the pseudo-left Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) government in 2015–19, which imposed brutal austerity, and now leads the Greek Left Alliance (ELAS), established in May. Commenting on the cable dispute, he struck a nationalist tone, stating that Rubio took a "Pontius Pilate" stance in refusing to back Greece's claim.

Tsipras slammed the decision to allow Rubio to speak at the Pnyx, which he claimed was incompatible with "Greece as the birthplace of democracy" given that the MAGA movement's "positions were at times completely borderline

with regard to the issue of democracy and sovereignty." He then boasted of his own decision as Greek prime minister to invite French President Emmanuel Macron—known as the "president of the rich"—and former US President Barack Obama to speak there, with Obama's address scuppered by security concerns.

Tsipras and the affluent layers of the middle class for which he speaks have no problem with an imperialism that conceals its predatory aims by draping itself in the language of democracy and human rights. In practice, such niceties are junked once the pseudo-left comes to power. It was on Tsipras's watch, and during the first Trump administration, that the Greece-US Strategic Dialogue was initiated in 2018, laying the groundwork for the subsequent upgrade of US imperialism's presence in Greece.

Absent from Rubio's visit was the verdict of the Greek working class, the overwhelming majority of whom oppose the wars in Ukraine and Iran and the genocide in Gaza. There is no progressive outlet for these sentiments. The only protest to take place was a 2,000-strong march on the US and Israeli embassies on October 6, called by the All Workers Militant Front (PAME)—the trade union federation affiliated with the Stalinist Communist Party of Greece (KKE)—along with sections of the trade union bureaucracy and various pseudo-left tendencies. The trade union bureaucracy in the main Adedy and GSEE federations refused to mobilise its members against the visit.

The urgent task facing Greek workers and youth is building a genuinely revolutionary party that rejects the nationalist outlook of the pseudo-left and the trade union bureaucracy, and is capable of uniting Greek workers with their counterparts in Türkiye and across the world against the imperialist powers' war drive.



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