

Stemming the Tide of Extremism: Recommendations for the U.S. Government

The Obama Administration can take the following steps now to combat the rise of hate parties in Greece and the erosion of democratic norms and standards:

To President Obama and the National Security Council:

- ◆ Articulate how the rise of extremist, antisemitic hate movements in Europe can threaten U.S. and European security and common prosperity. Urge all European Union nations to take immediate steps to protect vulnerable minorities and step up enforcement of laws against violence and related acts motivated by hatred or political extremism.
 - ◆ Support the Greek Government's initiative to prosecute Golden Dawn leaders not for their ideologies but for their criminal acts. At the same time, affirm that the ongoing trial be conducted according to European legal standards and with full protections for the rights of the accused.
 - ◆ Increase U.S. support for efforts by the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) to combat hate crimes, antisemitism, racism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination.
 - ◆ Work with European leaders on joint efforts to alleviate poverty and stimulate grass-roots economic development in Greece to undercut support for political extremism. Specifically:
 - Formulate a coordinated strategy to improve standards of living and blunt public resentment against "western"-imposed austerity programs.
 - Direct the Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and State as well as USAID to identify ways to promote broad-based economic recovery and entrepreneurship in Greece, including by targeting youth.
- Consider public-private partnerships, alternative lending practices, increased exchanges, and other public diplomacy programs to defuse drivers of political radicalization.
- ◆ Investigate allegations that Russian President Vladimir Putin's government is providing logistical or financial support to antisemitic, racist, or white supremacist groups in Europe, Ukraine, or other nations. Specifically investigate reports of loans made by Russian-connected banks to far-right European parties. This investigation should include the loan of 9 million Euros to France's Front National by the First Czech Russian Bank and any related transactions, and reports of Russian-backed loans to the Golden Dawn Party in Greece, Jobbik in Hungary, Vlaams Belang in Belgium, the Northern League in Italy, or the Freedom Party of Austria. Present a classified assessment of whether the Kremlin is attempting to use such parties to undermine the European Union or thwart NATO expansion. Release an unclassified version to Congress and the public.
 - ◆ Develop an action plan for the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security to assist Greece in investigating and prosecuting police abuse and corruption as well as countering violent extremism.

To the State Department and USAID:

- ◆ Send embassy officers to monitor the trial proceedings. Encourage European missions to do the same and share assessments.
- ◆ Issue public statements on whether the U.S. government views the trial as adhering properly to relevant due process standards.

- ◆ With the Department of Justice, offer bilateral aid in hate-crime data collection, police investigations, and prosecutions. Support NGOs working in this area.
- ◆ Encourage Greece to implement fully its National Plan to fight corruption as a means to speed economic recovery and restore public trust in government. Engage with Greece's Anti-Corruption Coordinator and explore ways to support his work through the Open Government Partnership.
- ◆ Encourage exchanges between Greek-Americans and Greek citizens focused on economic redevelopment, improving the climate for foreign investment, reducing corruption, and eradicating violent extremism in both nations.

To the Department of Commerce:

- ◆ Lead an interagency review of barriers to U.S. investment in Greece, including corruption, burdensome bureaucracy, and weaknesses in the judicial system.