Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 8232 ACTION SECSTATE 25 NOV

QUOTE

S E C R E T ATHENS 8232

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, GR
SUBJECT: FALL OF PAPADOPOULOS

1. PAPADOPOULOS FELL BECAUSE HE WAS BASICALLY
UNABLE TO PUT INTO CONCRETE REALITY THE COUP OF 1967. EVEN
SIX YEARS IN POWER WERE INSUFFICIENT TO INSPIRE HIM WITH
A VIABLE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL PROGRAM, OR WITH THE
REQUISITE POPULAR SUPPORT. HE WANTED DEMOCRACY BUT WITH
CONTROL AND ORDER. HE NEVER FULLY APPRECIATED THAT PUBLIC
SUPPORT, CLEAR IDEAS AND EFFECTIVE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP
WERE ESSENTIAL TO HIS EFFORTS TO CONCEIVE AND MAKE A REALITY
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OF HIS DREAMS FOR GREECE.

2. IN SOME RESPECTS PAPADOPOULOS' GREATEST WEAKNESS WAS HIS
INDECISIVENESS. HE AVOIDED CONFRONTATION AT ALMOST ANY COST.
EVEN WHEN HE KNEW THAT GENERAL IOANNIDES POSED A GRAVE THREAT
TO HIS FUTURE HE HESITATED, AND REFUSED TO TAKE WHAT SEEMED
TO BE INEVITABLE STEPS TO CONFRONT AND ELIMINATE IOANNIDES
FROM THE ATHENS SCENE.

3. PAPADOPOULOS FACED INCREASING PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THE
NATURAL EROSION TO HIS POWER AFTER SIX YEARS IN OFFICE,
THE GROWING COMPLEXITY OF HIS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, AND
THE ACCELERATING DEMANDS AND PRESSURES OF THE GREEK STUDENTS
AND GREEK PEOPLE FOR FREEDOM. THE NAVY MUTINY ONLY HIGHLIGHTED
AND BROUGHT TO A FOCUS HIS DESPERATE POSITION. BY WHAT
APPEARED TO BE A BRILLIANT COUQ DE THEATRE, HE PROCLAIMED THE
REPUBLIC, PROMISED ELECTIONS, AND ISSUED A GENERAL AMNESTY.
HE THEN CREATED A NEW AND MORE HOPEFUL ATMOSPHERE. MARKEZINIS
BOOSTED THIS PUBLIC POSTURE WITH EARNEST SUPPORT OF PAPADOPOULOS’
EFFORTS TO RETURN GREECE TO POLITICAL “NORMALCY”.

4. BUT TWO FATEFUL ELEMENTS INTERPOSED THEMSELVES. EVEN IF
PAPADOPOULOS WAS SINCERE, HE WAS UNABLE TO SWAY THE OLD
POLITICAL WORLD. THEIR FAILURE TO RESPOND WAS BOTH TRAGIC
AND INDICATIVE THAT THE GREEK CHARACTER HAD NOT LOST THE ESSENTIAL
ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY WHICH HAVE PLAGUED THESE PEOPLE SINCE
THE DAYS OF PERICLES. THEY PREFERRED TO RISK DESTRUCTION
RATHER THAN COOPERATE WITH A MAN THEY HATED. THEIR HATRED
WAS TO THE MOST VENOMOUS FORM. IN ADDITION, THE PEOPLE
WERE MOST SKEPTICAL. THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN PAPADOPOULOS’
PROMISES. INFLATION, ISSUES OF CORRUPTION, NEPOTISM,
POOR ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROBLEMS OF MAKING ENDS MEET A
HIGHER LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS MADE RECEPTION OF THE PAPADOPOULOS-
MARKEZINIS PROGRAM DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT.

5. THE MATTER WAS BROUGHT TO AN EXPLOSIVE POINT BY THE
STUDENT OUTBREAK, THE VIOLENT ELEMENTS WHICH ASSOCIATED WITH
IT, AND THE DEATHS WHICH RESULTED. THE MEMORIES WHICH THIS
VIOLENCE EVOKED, COMBINED WITH THE STUDENT SLOGANS OF THE
TRAGIC CIVIL WAR OF THE 40’S, PROVIDED THE SCATACLYSTIC FACTOR
EXPLODING PAPADOPOULOS OUT OF POWER.

6. THE US APPARENTLY NOW FACES A BASICALLY HARDLINER JUNTA EFFORT
TO RESTORE THE PRISTINE NATURE OF THE 1967 COUP. THERE IS
MUSH LESS CHANCE OF POPULAR SUPPORT, AND A MUCH GREATER
POSSIBILITY OF POLARIZATION WITH VIOLENCE. WHAT THE COUNTRY
NEEDS IS MORE FREEDOM AND MORE STEAM LETTING, NOT REPRESSION.
IOANNIDES IS A HARDLINER WHO, WITH HIS MILITARY POLICE, HAS
HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THE IMAGE OF TORTURE AND TOUGHNESS FOR
WHICH THE PAPADOPOULOS REGIME HAS SUFFERED.

7. THIS “JUNTA” HAS TO FACE ALL THE SAME PROBLEMS OF FREEDOM,
ORDER, ECONOMIC STABILITY AND GROWTH. YET, ACCORDING TO OUR
EARLY INFORMATION, IT HAS LESS CAPABILITY IN THE KINDS OF
PEOPLE LIKELY TO MAN IT. THEY ARE VERY LIKELY TO FAIL BECAUSE
THEY COMPLETELY UNDERRATE THE PROBLEMS OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY PRESENTLY FACING THE COUNTRY. A SIMPLISTIC MILITARY APPROACH TO THESE PROBLEMS WILL LIKELY LEAD TO POLARIZATION, VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION.

8. AS FOR OUR VITAL INTERESTS IN THIS COUNTRY, THESE NEW SELF APPOINTED LEADERS ARE ALL TO BE CLASSED AS "PRO-AMERICAN". THEY HAVE NO PLACE TO GO EXCEPT IN HARMONY WITH OUR SECURITY INTERESTS, E.G., THREE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES TO THE NORTH, TURKEY TO THE EAST, AND THE SOVIET FLEET IN MASS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. ALSO, GREECE IS RUNNING A $600 MILLION PAYMENTS SURPLUS WITH THE UNITED STATES. JUST AS I BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO THE PAPADOPOULOS-MARKEZINIS EFFORT TO HOLD "IRREPROACHABLE" ELECTIONS, SO I BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAKE OUR POSITION CRYSTAL CLEAR TO THE NEW MILITARY COUP D'ETATISTS IN THE MATTER OF DEMOCRACY AND FREE ELECTIONS. IT IS VITAL THAT IOANNIDES UNDERSTAND THE IMPERATIVES OF POLITICAL STABILITY IN GREECE-THAT THIS IS THE CRITICAL ELEMENT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, AS WELL AS THE COHESIVENESS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. ON THIS SUBJECT I HAVE TRANSMITTED A SEPARATE MESSAGE SUGGESTING APPROPRIATE AND USEFUL ACTION ON OUR PART AT THIS TIME.

TASCA UNQUOTE KISSINGER

SECRET

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