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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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June 18, 1974

Mr. George Demopoulos
Washington Correspondent
VRADYNI
12204 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Dear Mr. Demopoulos:

Thank you for your letter in connection with the resumption of the publication of the newspaper, VRADYNI. Herewith my replies to the questions in the order you pose them in your letter.

1. First let me say that in wishing the VRADYNI well on its reappearance, I hope that this welcomed event portends a return to the rule of law and constitutional government in Greece. Freedom of the press, of course, would be a salient feature of this return.

As a long time friend and admirer of the Greek people, I am distressed by the political situation in Greece. Under the present circumstances, the civil rights of the Greek people are suspended, but without any compensating advantages in economic well-being. In fact, I understand Greece is suffering from one of the highest inflation rates in Europe with no planned relief.

It is ironic that in a country where democracy was born, it is now rejected. I believe that a prompt return to constitutional government would help restore national unity and permit the Greek people to close ranks in combatting the social and economic difficulties besetting them.

2. Concentration camps and imprisonment for political beliefs are symptomatic of a breakdown in trust between a government and the governed, often leading to the repression of human rights and an attempt to trammel the human spirit. For Greece, in particular, such a situation is an aberration. It smothers the flame of freedom

that has illumined Greek history since the Greek city-states and the glorious age of Pericles. That is why it hurts to read the accounts of what it means to be a political prisoner in Greece in terms of indignities to fellow human beings. The liberal leader, George Mavros, for instance, upon his recent release from prison has sad tales to tell of man's inhumanity to man, so uncharacteristic of Greek thought and tradition.

The abolition, therefore, of imprisonment and mistreatment of citizens for political or any other unjustified cause will certainly be a great stride back from an abnormal twist in Greek development and forward on the traditional course of Greek political life.

3. No nation should interfere in the internal affairs of another nation. Nor should one nation try to make decisions for another nation. I believe, therefore, that American policy regarding the transition to democratic institutions in Greece should, if anything, be less active and more truly neutral. The United States, for example, has been too active in support of the military regimes in Greece by continuing military assistance that may be used against the Greek people and through statements and close association of our own military representatives that identify the United States not with the Greek people but with an obviously minority regime.

Such a policy interferes in the search of the Greek people for alternatives to their present mode of government.

But being neutral in action does not mean being uncritical in word. If, for example, the United States or other NATO partners conclude that one of its members is failing to live up to the partnership obligations because of a domestic situation, or any other reason, the other partners have a right, if not a duty, to speak up and say so. Here again, failure to speak up can be interpreted as passive interference.

The spirit in which criticism is made, however, is crucial. It should be candid and constructive, aimed at helping not just tearing down. Furthermore, if the Junta or any other Greek group should ask our advice on the question of a transition to democratic institutions, a neutral policy need not prevent us from being as forthcoming with our opinions and views as possible.

The United States will warmly welcome the return of constitutional government to Greece and will be as helpful as it appropriately can, but only Greece itself can accomplish that goal. In doing so, however, the Greek people must be free from outside interference to make their own decisions and to take the action they think best.

I hope that the above response to your questions will be helpful. Please let me know, if I can be of any further assistance.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,



Claiborne Pell

