

Toppling of Greek Junta Foreseen

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The military junta now in power in Greece will be toppled before the end of June.

This is the grim estimate of experts on Greek affairs at the State Department, Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency.

The expected revolt could bring to power forces hostile to the United States, which would be an irreparable blow to the Western Alliance. For since the end of World War II, Greece has been the cornerstone of Western defenses in the Mediterranean.

The United States stands to lose strategic air bases in Athens and on Crete, and smaller installations throughout Greece. Recently constructed "home-porting" facilities in Athens for Sixth Fleet destroyers would have to be abandoned. Lost, also, would be a powerful Voice of America transmitter.

The daily cable traffic from Athens tells of chaos inside the current government. Gen. Dimitrios Ioannides, commander of the military police and the real power behind the scenes, is, in the words of one U.S. expert, a "political primitive." The men he has chosen to run the government, we are told, are of a similar ilk.

Ioannides is not even in firm control of his own military. He recently took a field trip to the Third Army area, near Salonika, for example, and ordered the commanding general to assemble his troops for a review. The Third Army commander refused.

Had the administration only signaled some displeasure with the ruling junta, the loss of a valued ally would not be imminent. Because many Greeks distrust the United States for its support of the repressive regime, experts say, the next leaders of Greece may be hostile.

Storm warnings were up as recently as January, when a congressional study mission returned from Athens and reported that "the present government cannot long endure."

Former Greek officials also have visited the United States to ask American support for some sort of "democratic restoration."

Nicholas Makarezos, a vice premier under Prime Minister George Papadopoulos, for example, urged U.S. backing for the return of former Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis, now living in Paris. And John Zighdis, a prominent parliamentarian, proffered his warnings before Congress at great personal risk.

Shower of Greenbacks—Uncle Sam's largesse toward the oil barons is legendary, but now he may have outdone himself.

A recent Federal Energy Administration ruling will shower \$1.7 million in government greenbacks upon the Shell and Mohawk oil companies, which are hardly needy enterprises.

The ruling was made, an FEA spokesman deadpanned, in order to make oil pricing regulations more consistent.

The new ruling allows the two oil firms to buy Navy oil for about \$5 per barrel, instead of about \$9 per barrel.

Not only must the Navy give up \$4 per barrel for the sake of consistency, the FEA has ruled, but the Navy must also reimburse the two companies for oil they purchased at the higher price since last October.

Previously, the FEA permitted the Navy to sell its oil at prevailing market prices. But the new ruling decrees that the Navy crude came from wells existing before the Arab oil embargo and, therefore, must be sold at pre-embargo prices.

Lucre for Litton—Apparently, President Nixon has given his personal approval to a scheme which would eliminate thousands of civilian employees on military bases and turn their work over to big defense contractors.

The giants of the industry, such as Lockheed, RCA and ITT, would take over such functions as transportation, food services, hospitals, engineering, postal services and aircraft maintenance on the bases.

The idea of letting commercial contractors handle the "operational support services" was concocted by the President's budget slashers, whose boss is Roy Ash.

One of the chief benefactors of the scheme, it is expected, will be Litton Industries, the firm founded by Ash. He left Litton 18 months ago to join the White House.

When we first told about the contracting scheme last December, the budget office claimed the matter was so routine that Ash was not aware of it. But now it turns out that President Nixon himself is pushing it.

This is apparent from a packet of documents, which Deputy Defense Secretary William Clements recently distributed to the various military services.

Among the papers, explaining the new contracting concept, is a "Dear Jim" letter from the President to Defense Secretary James Schlesinger. The letter applauds the "management program that we launched a year ago."