

GREECE

The Ultimate Symbol

Ever since they seized power 18 months ago, Greece's ruling colonels have waged a remarkably successful campaign to secure international acceptance of their stern rightist regime. Though their coup was bitterly denounced in practically every capital in the world, the colonels have managed to win grudging diplomatic recognition from the major powers as the effective, if unloved masters of Greece. Last week Colonel-turned-Premier George Papadopoulos finally gained the concession that he and his fellow junta colleagues regarded as the ultimate symbol of acceptance. It was the resumption by the U.S. of heavy-arms shipments to Greece.

Shortly after the coup, the U.S. suspended shipments of heavy weaponry, such as tanks and jet fighters, to Greece's NATO-committed armed forces—though the flow of small arms, ammunition and spare parts was allowed to continue. By so doing, the U.S. hoped to gain leverage over the colonels in order to persuade them to return the country to democratic rule. The effort failed. Though Papadopoulos and his colleagues have enacted a new constitution and made other gestures toward a re-establishment of representative rule, the country remains under martial law. Furthermore, the junta shows no inclination to hold free elections any time soon.

Readiness. Meanwhile, political and military developments in Europe have given the colonels considerable leverage over the U.S. The growing Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean convinced Pentagon planners of the need for a strengthening of NATO's eastward flank. Even more important, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the continuing threat to Yugoslavia were a clear indication that Greece's armed forces should be brought up to a high state of readiness. Consequently, the U.S. State Department wrestled down its objection to the junta and agreed to renewed shipments of heavy arms. The first consignment will consist of two minesweepers and 60 aircraft, including 22 F-102 Delta Daggers and five F-104 Starfighters. Though Washington tries to insist that the ban is only partly lifted, other heavy equipment, including tanks and armored personnel carriers, most likely will follow. Making the most of Greece's new strategic importance, the junta is demanding a 50% increase in U.S. aid, which prior to the coup had been averaging \$65 million per year.

The U.S. decision dismayed critics of the junta, both in the U.S. and abroad. As the Washington Post put it: "In the name of defending the free world, Washington props up a government that withholds freedom from its own people." Given the Soviet Union's aggressive new stance, the Administration could argue that it had little choice, but a defensible choice is not necessarily a desirable one.

WEST GERMANY

Of Suicide and Espionage

The darkroom assistant in Dancker's photo shop in Bonn could hardly believe his eyes. Among banal vacation snapshots on a strip of film taken from a Minox camera were nine pictures of NATO documents clearly marked "Top Secret" and "Secret." It took police and the West German Counter Espionage Service four days to identify the owner of the film. He proved to be Rear Admiral Hermann Lüdke, formerly deputy chief (early 1966 to mid-1967) of the logistics section of SHAPE, NATO's European command, who was on the eve of his retirement from the service.

Lüdke had held a CTS (Cosmic Top Secret) clearance in the SHAPE job and



REAR ADMIRAL LÜDKE

Beginning of an astonishing wave.

knew the most sensitive details of NATO logistics: the capacities of European ports, transport, defense industries; the location of nuclear weapons depots and ordnance stockpiles of the NATO armies, virtually down to the number of available artillery rounds. The photos suggested that he might be transmitting secrets to NATO's enemies.

Feted with Champagne. Lüdke, 57, a handsome, gregarious man, was not told of the suspicions against him until three days before he left the navy. The occasion was a champagne luncheon feting his retirement. After a laudatory farewell speech by Defense Minister Gerhard Schröder, Vice Admiral Gert Jeschonnek, the chief of the navy, and a counterespionage man took Lüdke aside to question him. The admiral at first lamely explained that someone must have stolen the Minox to take the pictures. However, he later changed his story to claim that he wanted the documents for his memoirs. If so, they would surely have ranked among the dullest ever written, since the documents were merely directives for handling supplies. Nevertheless, he was allowed to

go home and was interrogated only the next day. Because West German counterespies apparently take weekends off, two more days elapsed before the federal attorney's office in Karlsruhe, which investigates and prosecutes treason, was informed of the case.* It took over the investigation, but unfortunately it did not stick close enough to the admiral.

On Oct. 8, Lüdke was found dead on a friend's hunting preserve near Trier in the Eifel Mountains, a fist-sized wound in his chest, his Mauser rifle, loaded with dum-dum rounds, across his legs. Accident? Lüdke was an avid hunter and too experienced a rifleman. Suicide? The Trier district attorney's office thought so, but it did not rule out murder. There was nothing in Lüdke's record to indicate a likelihood of treason, but the federal prosecutor's office left open the possibility that he had spied for a foreign power.

Weakest Link. Most Germans are fairly inured to espionage cases. Their country, with an estimated 6,000 foreign agents operating inside its borders, has long been considered NATO's weakest security link. But even the most cynical were soon fascinated, for Lüdke's death marked the beginning of an astonishing wave of suicides among government officials. On the day of Lüdke's death, Major General Horst Wendland, 56, deputy chief of the Federal Intelligence Service, Bonn's equivalent of the CIA, shot himself in his office. The government explanation: he was despondent over an "incurable depressive illness." On Oct. 15, a promising young official in the Economics Ministry hanged himself. On Oct. 16, a woman working in the Federal Press and Information Office took a fatal overdose of drugs. On Oct. 18, Bundeswehr Lieut. Colonel Johannes Grimm, 54, working in the Alarm and Mobilization Section of the Defense Ministry, shot himself. He, too, said the government, was despondent over an incurable disease. On Oct. 23, it was announced that a senior clerk in the Defense Ministry had disappeared after leaving a suicide note.

In each case, there were personal explanations for the death, but security officials did not rule out other motives, even though only Lüdke, Wendland and Grimm had had access to classified information. One line of speculation suggested that extensive security checks launched in sensitive departments after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia might have frightened enemy agents into suicide. Bonn admitted last week that toward the beginning of October, after one East German agent had been arrested, six others fled West Germany. But it did not tie them to the admiral. By week's end the Lüdke case remained open—and with it lingered the specter of a major and painful espionage scandal.

* In May 1951, a similar respect for the English weekend by the British authorities enabled Spy Donald Maclean to escape to the Soviet Union.