

A Kennedy Political Crisis

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Washington

JACKIE Kennedy Onassis has been placed in an awkward position by Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy's recent forays into foreign policy.

Ted has offended the military rulers of two countries — Greece and Pakistan — with which Jackie has strong personal ties.

The former First Lady's reluctance to attend last week's splash opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts may have been partly due to unwillingness to be spotlighted with Ted at this time.

Jackie's secretary in New York cited unexplained "personal reasons" for the sudden cancellation. She denied reports it was due to Jackie's fear of being mobbed. Whatever the cause, the decision to stay away came in the wake of the following events:

The Senator's August 26 statement opposing aid to Greece occurred at a delicate moment for Jackie's husband. Aristotle Onassis, Ari needs the good will of the military junta now ruling Greece to obtain a \$700 million contract with the Greek government for an industrial complex. At the moment the deal is touch-and-go.

Ted has also clashed with the Pakistanis. As chairman of the Senate ref-

ugee subcommittee, he visited India recently and leveled a blistering attack on Pakistan for cruelty to millions of Bengalis whose refugee camps he inspected. He drew an angry retort from the Pakistan ambassador to the United States, Agha Hilaly.

When Jackie was in the White House, she and the late president Kennedy were close to former Pakistani President Ayub Khan. They entertained him lavishly. And after Jackie visited Pakistan, Ayub reciprocated by giving her a magnificent gelding, Sardar, one of her favorite mounts.

Ted's criticism of the tragedy in Bengal cut into the warmth the Kennedy name has enjoyed with Pakistan's rulers. Among other things, embassy sources say he ignored a personal invitation from the president of Pakistan during his trip.

The charged atmosphere surrounding the Greek and Pakistani situations recalls the Cuban and Israeli-Arab tensions which were linked by investigators to the assassinations of JFK and Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

That in itself might be enough to keep Jackie away.

Officials at the Pakistani Embassy are openly antagonistic to Ted. The Greeks are tight-lipped but sarcastic.

Calling the Senator "discourteous," Pakistani Am-

bassador Hilaly said, "Neither President Kennedy nor Robert Kennedy would have been so rude. Pakistan cried when JFK died. We named one of our big streets in Karachi for him."

Privately, embassy sources insinuate Ted is using Greece, Pakistan, and his refugee subcommittee to build himself up for the presidency in 1972. The Senator denied presidential ambitions in 1972, and his office insists his concern is purely humanitarian.

Greek Ambassador Basil Vitsaxis, in an interview, said of Ted, "Nobody does something without a reason. Those running for president should know exactly what their voters think about Greece."

Vitsaxis then whipped out a resolution passed recently by AHEPA, the nation's largest Greek-American organization, which boasts more than 80,000 members.

The resolution condemned a recent House vote cutting off \$118 million in United States aid to the military regime. Vitsaxis hopes the Senate will restore it.

Had she attended the

JFK Center opening, Jackie would have arrived just as a House subcommittee was scheduled to resume hearings on Greece, with several anti-junta witnesses in the lineup.

Last year Ted and 41 other Senators voted against aid to Greece. Last month, Ted told the National Press Club he still opposes such aid.

The remark was swiftly relayed to the Greek ambassador and thence to Athens.

Presumably, it was also passed on to Onassis, who keeps his business and social contacts with the junta green.

Within days Greek Premier Papadopoulos voiced a tough, "hands off" policy toward the United States.

It was just about the time that Jackie decided to shun Washington.

Vitsaxis followed the line taken by his Premier.

He termed the House aid cut "bad politics" and claimed that aid is "a matter of the common defense."

Vitsaxis said he would present his views to Senator Kennedy the next time their paths crossed.