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Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie on Greece

Edmund S. Muskie

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STATEMENT ON GREECE

BY EDWARD S. MUSKIE

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The coup that took place in Greece in April 1967 has been a tragic setback to Greece's political and economic development, and has strained Greece's relations with her Western European neighbors. Greece's modern history has been marked by the political activism of its armed forces, but prior to the accession of the junta, there was the promise that a tradition of constitutional continuity was beginning to assert itself.

While fully recognizing Greece's importance as an ally on NATO's strategic southern flank, I support the policy initiated by President Johnson of suspending shipment of major military items to the junta. I endorse efforts to move the colonels to restoring full constitutional government, and urge that the arrival of an American Ambassador in Athens be used to make our views heard at higher political levels.

We must continue to encourage Greece's return to those democratic principles which it first articulated for our civilization. At the same time, I feel our experience elsewhere has shown that we cannot, with certainty, force a reluctant government toward a particular course of action. For this reason I believe that the decisive element in Greece's return to democracy will depend finally upon the action of the Greek people themselves.
