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SUBJECT: PRESS SUPPLEMENT ON THE 25-YEAR HISTORY OF 17 NOVEMBER

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR R. NICHOLAS BURNS; REASON 1.5 (B,D)

¶1. (U) THE ATHENS DAILY, "ELEFTHEROTYPIA," PUBLISHED A DETAILED 23-PAGE SUPPLEMENT TO ITS APRIL 15 EDITION, ENTITLED "25 YEARS OF 17N." AT FIRST BLUSH, THE SUPPLEMENT SEEMED TO BE A TYPE OF EXPOSE ON 17 NOVEMBER. ON CLOSER READING, THE COVERAGE'S MESSAGE IS NOT HARD-HITTING. INDEED, THE SUPPLEMENT MAKES A CASE FOR A KIND OF ARMISTICE BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES AND 17 NOVEMBER AND AN INFORMAL AMNESTY FOR THOSE WHO COMMITTED TERRORIST CRIMES.

¶2. (U) THE SUPPLEMENT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO ROUGHLY TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PRESENTS A FACTUAL HISTORY OF 17 NOVEMBER'S TERRORIST ACTIVITIES BEGINNING WITH THE ASSASSINATION OF RICHARD WELCH IN DECEMBER 1975, COMPLETE WITH A DETAILED AND NEARLY COMPREHENSIVE CHRONOLOGY AND A MAP OF MAJOR 17 NOVEMBER ATTACKS IN GREATER ATHENS. THE ARTICLES AND INTERVIEWS IN THE FIRST PART CONTAIN ALMOST NO NEW INFORMATION AND PRESENT LONG-STANDING, WELL-KNOWN VIEWS. COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN PUBLICIZED BEFORE (AND COULD ONLY HAVE COME FROM POLICE FILES), ALSO APPEAR. AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS PART OF THE SUPPLEMENT ARE:

-- PROSECUTOR IOANNIS DIOTIS, WHO ARGUES THAT THE COUNTERTERRORIST LAWS NOW IN THE BOOKS ARE SUFFICIENT FOR PURSUING 17 NOVEMBER AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS. THE WEAKNESS, HE SAYS, IS THE JURY SYSTEM, WHICH OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRIBERY AND THREATS. DIOTIS SAYS JURIES ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR TERRORIST CASES.

-- LAW PROFESSOR NIKOS PARASKEVOPOULOS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI, WHO DISCUSSES THE HISTORY OF COUNTERTERRORIST PENAL LEGISLATION.

-- NEW DEMOCRACY DEPUTY DORA BAKOGIANNI (INTERVIEW), WHOSE HUSBAND, PAVLOS BAKOGIANNIS, AN ND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, WAS GUNNED DOWN BY 17 NOVEMBER IN 1989. AMONG OTHER THINGS, SHE SAYS THAT PASOK'S REPEAL OF THE COUNTERTERRORIST LAWS PASSED BY THE MITSOTAKIS WAS A MISTAKE THAT HAD NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. SHE BELIEVES THAT JURIES SHOULD NOT BE A PART OF TERRORIST TRIALS.

-- FORMER PASOK PUBLIC ORDER MINISTER STELIOS PAPATHEMELIS (INTERVIEW), WHO SUGGESTS THAT 17 NOVEMBER HAS BECOME A KIND OF EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION THAT DIRECTS OTHERS AND PROBABLY NO LONGER REPRESENTS ITS PAST FANATICAL LEFTIST VIEWS EVEN THOUGH IT MAY CONTINUE TO USE THE RADICAL VOCABULARY OF AN EARLIER ERA.

¶3. (U) THE SECOND PART OF THE SUPPLEMENT, COMPRISING AN INTERVIEW, TWO ESSAYS, AND AN UNSIGNED ARTICLE IS DEVOTED TO HOW TO APPROACH THE 17 NOVEMBER QUESTION, EFFECTIVELY PROMOTING AN INFORMAL AMNESTY.

-- IN AN INTERVIEW, YIANNIS PANOUSIS, IDENTIFIED AS A PROFESSOR OF CRIMINOLOGY, ARGUES THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO ARRIVE AT A "POLITICAL" SOLUTION TO THE 17 NOVEMBER ISSUE. THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAYS, SHOULD CONSIDER "REHABILITATION" OF 17 NOVEMBER MEMBERS, ADDING THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE "HAVE FORGIVEN GERMANS, TURKS, AND THE JUNTA." THE INTERVIEW IS ENTITLED, "A VARKIZA IS NEEDED FOR TERRORISM," REFERRING TO THE TOWN SOUTH OF ATHENS WHERE THE COMMUNIST-LED RESISTANCE AND THE BRITISH-BACKED ROYAL GOVERNMENT SIGNED AN ARMISTICE IN 1945 AFTER INITIAL FIGHTING, FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF GERMAN OCCUPATION FORCES.

-- IN HER ESSAY, "POLITICAL VIOLENCE: A GREEK UNIQUENESS," MARY BOSSI, A FORMER HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC ORDER MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR COUNTERTERRORISM UNDER THEN PRIME MINISTER

MITSO TAKIS, REPEATS HER WELL-KNOWN VIEWS. SHE IS CRITICAL OF WHAT SHE CALLS THE "APOLOGETIC" POSTURE OF GREEK GOVERNMENTS VIS-A-VIS THE U.S. ON ITS EFFORTS TO CAPTURE THE TERRORISTS. SUGGESTING AN AMNESTY, BOSSI SAYS THAT THE "HONORABLE RETIREMENT" OF THE 17 NOVEMBER QUESTION WOULD BE A KIND OF A SOLUTION.

-- SOPHIA VIDALI, A LECTURER AT THE SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION FACULTY OF THE DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE, STATES IN HER ESSAY, "TIME TO FACE POLITICAL MEASURES," THAT THE MAIN VIOLENT THREAT CONFRONTING GREECE TODAY IS MAINSTREAM CRIME RATHER POLITICALLY MOTIVATED TERRORISM. SHE SAYS THAT TERRORISM IS NOW A QUESTION ONLY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. TERRORISM, SHE CONTINUES, SHOULD BE DEALT WITH ON "POLITICAL TERMS." WHILE THE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN, SHE ARGUES THAT A "DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM CANNOT FUNCTION ON THE BASIS OF RETRIBUTION."

-- AN UNSIGNED ARTICLE STATES THAT, ACCORDING TO A REPORT BY PROSECUTION OFFICIALS, 17 NOVEMBER'S TERRORIST ACTIVITIES HAVE DECREASED AND ARE LIKELY TO FALL TO ZERO IN THE FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, THE REPORT NOTES THAT 17 NOVEMBER COULD BECOME ACTIVE AGAIN AND WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED THE NUMBER ONE TERRORIST THREAT FOR GREECE.

14. (C) COMMENT: THE IDEA OF A "POLITICAL SETTLEMENT" OF THE TERRORIST QUESTION IN GREECE, HOWEVER UNWELCOME, IS NOT ALTOGETHER NEW. DEVOTING AN ENTIRE SUPPLEMENT TO THE ISSUE IS A DEPARTURE IN PRESS PRACTICE, HOWEVER. IN THE PAST, "ELEFTHERTOTYPIA," WITH THE SECOND LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ALL GREEK NEWSPAPERS, HAS SERVED AS A MOUTHPIECE FOR LEFT-WING CAUSES AND HAS PUBLISHED PROCLAMATIONS OF 17 NOVEMBER. THE TONE OF THE SUPPLEMENT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING. WE WILL NEED TO BLUNT THIS LINE OF ARGUMENTATION WHEN WE LAUNCH OUR REWARDS PROGRAM IN THE COMING MONTH. LEST THERE BE VOICES IN THE SIMITIS ADMINISTRATION PUSHING FOR A "POLITICAL" SOLUTION," WE WILL ALSO NEED TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT THAT THIS IS NOT THE KIND OF RESOLUTION OF THE TERRORIST PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE IN MIND. INTERESTINGLY, THE SUPPLEMENT HAS GONE VIRTUALLY UNNOTICED AND UNREMARKED IN THE GREEK POLITICAL SCENE. THAT, BY ITSELF, DEMONSTRATES THE UPHILL TASK WE FACE IN GALVANIZING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GREEK GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION OF A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY ON TERRORISM.

BURNS