

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY OSLO
US MISSION NATO 937
USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS; PINT, SP

SUBJECT: THE KING'S VISIT TO ASTURIAS

1. KING JUAN CARLOS ENDED HIS TWO DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE PROVINCE OF ASTURIAS YESTERDAY, MAY 20, WITH ALL MAJOR DAILIES FEATURING FRONT PAGE PHOTOS OF THE KING AND QUEEN, DRESSED IN MINERS GEAR, VISITING THE MINES OF HUMOSA.
2. ON THE FIRST DAY JUAN CARLOS, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, PRIME MINISTER ARIAS, CORTES PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, AND OTHER MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS, BEGAN HIS TOUR WITH A VISIT TO

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THE SHRINE OF THE VIRGIN OF COVAFONGA, THE PATRON SAINT OF THE

PRINCIPALITY OF ASTURIAS. THERE HE ACCEPTED, BY PERITION OF THE LOCALITY, THE TITLE OF "PRINCE OF ASTURIAS," THE TRADITIONAL TITLE FOR THE CROWN PRINCE OF SPAIN, ON BEHALF OF HIS SON FELIPE.

3. IT WAS AT THIS SHRINE THAT THE SYMBOLIC BEGINNING OF THE "RECONQUISTA" TOOK PLACE. JUAN CARLOS CITED THIS AND SAID, "ASTURIAN PATRIOTISM IS AN IMMEASURABLE TREASURE AND THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU INTEGRATE YOUR PROFOUND REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS INTO THE SUPREME UNITY OF SPAIN IS AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL SPANIARDS... THE UNITY OF SPAIN, EMBODIED IN THE MONARCHY, PRESUPPOSES THE LIBERTY AND THE EQUALITY OF ALL ITS MEN, OF ALL ITS PROVINCES AND REGIONS."

4. THE FIRST DAY ENDED WITH AN OFFICIAL RECEPTION OF THE KING IN OVIEDO, THE SQUARE BEFORE THE TOWN HALL PACKED WITH AN OBVIOUSLY ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD.

5. THE SECOND AND LAST DAY BEGAN IN OVIEDO WITH A WORKING SESSION WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE PROVINCIAL CIVIL GOVERNOR. THE BALANCE OF THE DAY WAS SPENT IN VISITS TO A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL CENTERS. IN PERLORA THE KING DELIVERED A SHORT ADDRESS WHICH THE PRESS IS BILLING AS A MAJOR POLITICAL STATEMENT HE SAID THAT HE HAD COME TO ASTURIAS TO FIND OUT, THROUGH CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE, WHAT THEY WERE ASKING FOR AND WHAT THEY HOPED FOR. THESE HE HAD HEARD AND, MORE, THE PEOPLE OF ASTURIAS "HAD PUT INTO HIGH RELIEF THE UNION OF THE KING WITH THE PEOPLE." THEY HAD PROCLAIMED "THAT FAITH AND THAT HOPE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE MONARCHY" WHICH REQUIRES THE KING TO ENSURE THAT "POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS OF THE NATION IS ORIENTED AND MOVED ACCORDING TO THE AUTHENTIC DESIRES OF THE PEOPLE." THE PRESS HAS IN PARTICULAR, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS LAST STATEMENT AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE KING'S DETERMINATION TO ANIMATE THE PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZATION IN TUNE WITH THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, IDENTIFYING HIMSELF AS HE DOES AS THE KING OF ALL SPANIARDS. THIS LAST HAS BEEN UNDERTUNED AS WELL BY THE KING'S INITIATIVE IN MEETING IN HIS OFFICE NOT ONLY WITH MEMBERS OF THE GOVT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE REGIME ESTABLISHMENT, BUT ALSO WITH LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION SUCH AS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GIL ROBLES AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADER GARCIA LOPEZ (IT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED THAT THE KING WILL BE MEETING WITH THE SOCIALIST LEADERS TIerno GALVAN OF THE PSP AND FELIPE GONZALEZ OF THE PSOE)

6. THROUGHOUT HIS TWO DAY VISIT JUAN CARLOS DELIBERATELY

SOUGHT OUT TWO THEMES: THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIMSELF AS
KING WITH THE TRADITIONS OF THE HISTORIC SPANISH MONARCHY
AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE KING WITH THE PEOPLE.
ESPECIALLY WITH THE WORKING CLASS. AS WITH HIS VISITS TO
CATALONIA AND ALUCIA, THE PUBLIC REACTION TO THIS
VISIT TO ASTURIAS HAS DEMONSTRATED THE HIGH POPULARITY
OF THE KING.
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