

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (JUAN CARLOS)

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRINCE JUAN CARLOS

1. DURING AN EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH PRINCE JUAN CARLOS IN PALMA DE MALLORCA ON SEPTEMBER 3, COVERING ANOTHER SUBJECT (SEPTEL), HE MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.
2. JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT DURING HIS TWO VISITS WITH FRANCO IN GALICIA THIS SUMMER, HE HAD RECEIVED ABSOLUTELY NO INDICATION THAT FRANCO HAD ANY PLANS TO TURN OVER POWER TO HIM. HE HAD DISCUSSED THE GENERAL SUBJECT WITH FRANCO TO LAY BEFORE HIM ARGUMENTATION AS TO WHY IT WOULD BE DESIREABLE TO BRING ABOUT SUCCESSION WHILE FRANCO WAS STILL ALIVE. HOWEVER, FRANCO GAVE NO HINT WHATSOEVER AS TO HIS THINKING. JUAN CARLOS COMMENTED TO ME THAT IN 1969 WHEN HE WAS NAMED FRANCO'S HEIR, HE ONLY HAD A VERY FEW DAYS ADVANCE NOTICE. HE ASSUMED THIS WOULD ALSO BE THE CASE IF FRANCO CHOSE TO TURN OVER PWER WHILE HE WAS STILL ALIVE. THE PRINCE INDICATED THAT THE HEAVY PUBLICITY GIVEN TO FRANCO'S VARIOUS ACTIVITIES THIS SUMMER--OFFICIAL, SOCIAL AND SPORTING--APPEARED AIMED AT CONVINCING PUBLIC OPINION THAT FRANCO WAS FULLY ABLE TO CARRY ON.
3. ARMED FORCES. JUAN CARLOS SAID HE WAS VERY TROUBLED BY THE STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT ARREST OF A SMALL NUMBER OF CAPTAINS AND MAJORS. HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT A GOOD MANY MORE OFFICERS, TOTALING POSSIBLY 400, MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN THIS SITUATION. HE WAS VERY

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CRITICAL OF THE WAY THE BUSQUETS CASE HAD BEEN HANDLED AND

SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IF BUSQUETS, INSTEAD OF BEING COURT-MARTIALED, HAD BEEN CALLED TO MADRID TO WORK WITH THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF, THIS WOULD HAVE HAD A MOST FAVORABLE EFFECT ON THE ARMED FORCES. BUSQUETS' COURT-MARTIAL AND SENTENCING HAD LEFT A VERY BAD IMPRESSION AMONGST THE CAPTAINS AND MAJORS WHO WERE ALREADY QUITE DISSATISFIED WITH THE SLOW PROGRESS OF THEIR CAREERS. BASICALLY, THE YOUNGER OFFICERS BELIEVED THAT THEIR CAREER SITUATION SHOULD BE IMPROVED AND THE ORIGINAL AIM OF MOST OF THE OFFICERS RECENTLY ARRESTED HAD BEEN TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING THEIR MILITARY SITUATION. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE OTHER OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY OTERO (WHOM JUAN CARLOS DESCRIBED AS A MARXIST SYMPATHIZER), HAD POLITICALLY MANIPULATED SOME OF THE OFFICERS WHO RESENTED THE TOLERATED POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF CERTAIN GENERALS (CAMPANO, INIESTO AND REBULL). THERE WAS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT SOME OF THE OFFICERS CONCERNED HAD CONTACTS IN PORTUGAL.

THE PRINCE SAID HE HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION TO FRANCO. FRANCO HAD BEEN TOTALLY INDIFFERENT TO THESE SIGNS OF RESTLESSNESS AND MAINTAINED THAT THERE WAS TOTAL UNITY IN THE ARMED FORCES AND FULL SUPPORT FOR HIM. THE PRINCE WAS ALSO RATHER CRITICAL OF ARMY MINISTER COLOMA WHO TOOK A LONG TIME TO GRASP THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT AT ONE TIME HE BELIEVED THAT HE COULD COUNT ON THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. HOWEVER, IF A CHANGE IN THE REGIME DID NOT COME ABOUT SOON, AND UNLESS CLOSER ATTENTION WAS PAID TO THE NEEDS OF THE ARMED FORCES NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF CAREER OPPORTUNITY, BUT ALSO WITH RESPECT TO MODERN EQUIPMENT, THIS TIME PERIOD COULD WELL BE REDUCED.

4. FUTURE. JUAN CARLOS TOLD ME THAT IT REMAINED HIS VIEW THAT PUBLIC OPINION DEMANDED A CHANGE IN SPAIN AND THE LONGER THE PRESENT SITUATION PREVAILED, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE FOR HIM TO CARRY OUT A SMOOTH TRANSITION. HE SAID HE HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HIS FIRST PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE UP OF MEN WHO HAD NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH THE PRESENT ASSOCIATION EFFORT AND WHO HAD NOT BEEN MINISTERS UNDER FRANCO. HE HAD TO DEMONSTRATE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE THAT THERE WAS A CHANGE, ALTHOUGH HE

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RECOGNIZED THAT THE RATE OF CHANGE COULD NOT BE TOO IMPETUOUS. HE FULLY RECOGNIZED THAT SOLIS AND SOME OF THE OLD GUARD OF THE REGIME WERE ENDEAVORING TO GET AS MUCH INTO THEIR HANDS AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO PREVENT MUCH CHANGE IN THE POST-FRANCO PERIOD. JUAN CARLOS GAVE ME NO INKLING AS TO THE IDENTITY OF HIS "PRIME MINISTER", BUT I DID GATHER THAT HE RULED OUT ANY MILITARY MAN, PRESENT OR PAST. WHEN I ASKED HIM HOW HE COULD BE SURE THAT HE WOULD GET THE RIGHT LIST OF THREE

FROM A COUNCIL OF THE REALM HAVING PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES, RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL AS ITS PRESIDENT, JUAN CARLOS SAID THAT HE THOUGH HE COULD COUNT NOT ONLY ON RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL, BUT ALSO ON AT LEAST 7 OF THE 18 MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. IT WAS HIS PRESENT IDEA TO HAVE A GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTED WHICH WOULD BE MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BROAD DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL CURRENTS IN SPAIN.

5. JUAN CARLOS ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LOOK FOR FOREIGN SUPPORT IN HIS TRANSITION. HE SAID THAT FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD TOLD ARIAS IN HELSINKI THAT THE FRG COULD DO LITTLE TO HELP SPAIN UNTIL AFTER FRANCO'S DEPARTURE. FRG PRESIDENT SCHEEL HAD ALSO RECENTLY SENT WORD TO JUAN CARLOS THAT HE PERSONALLY WOULD PLAN TO ATTEND JUAN CARLOS' SWEARING-IN AS KING. JUAN CARLOS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT OTHER LIKE-MINDED CHIEFS OF STATE WOULD ALSO ATTEND WHEN THE TIME CAME.

6. SAHARA. JUAN CARLOS REFERRED BRIEFLY TO THE SAHARA SITUATION AND SAID THAT KING HASSAN HAD EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND A FOUR-PARTY MEETING IN NEW YORK IF JUAN CARLOS WAS TO BE THE SPANISH REPRESENTATIVE. JUAN CARLOS SAID HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF INVOLVING HIMSELF IN THIS PROBLEM WHICH COULD HAVE ONLY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR HIM. HE SPECULATED THAT EITHER ARIAS OR MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY CARRO HAD FLOATED THE IDEA OF HIS BEING THE SPANISH REPRESENTATIVE. JUAN CARLOS PERSONALLY HOPED THT FRANCO WOULD NOT LEAVE THE SCENE UNTIL THE SAHARA PROBLEM HAD BEEN RESOLVED.
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