

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7375

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: PRESSURES FOR TRANSFER OF POWER TO JUAN CARLOS

REF: MADRID 7327

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO ONE WELL-INFORMED POLITICIAN, FRANCO'S FAMILY IS WITHHOLDING TRUTH ABOUT HIS REAL CONDITION FROM HIM IN EFFORT TO PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF POWER. ARIAS AND CABINET, SUPPORTED BY KEY MILITARY LEADERS, ARE DETERMINED, IN HIS VIEW, TO CONVINCEN FRANCO TO RESIGN RATHER THAN SEEK HIS REMOVAL BY COMPLICATED CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE BY DECLARING HIM INCAPACITATED. GOVT LEADERS AND ESTABLISHMENT REPORTEDLY BELIEVE THAT FRANCO'S CONDITION IS TERMINAL AND TRANSFER OF POWER MUST TAKE PLACE, PREFERABLY WITH FRANCO'S OWN BLESSING. END SUMMARY

1. FORMER MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND CURRENT KEY PROMOTOR OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, ALFONSO OSORIO, TOLD EMBOFF OCT 22 THAT ONE OF FRANCO'S PHYSICIANS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT CAUDILLO HAD SUFFERED THREE HEART ATTACKS BETWEEN OCT 16 AND 21. IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT HE WOULD SUFFER OTHER INTERMITTENT ATTACKS, ONE OF WHICH WOULD BE FATAL. FRANCO, MEANWHILE, WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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UNAWARE OF HIS REAL CONDITION BECAUSE HIS FAMILY WAS WITHHOLDING

MEDICAL REPORTS FROM HIM, LEAVING HIM WITH IMPRESSION THAT HE MERELY HAD SEVERE FLU ATTACK. FRANCO, THEREFORE, THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS QUITE NORMAL. WHEN ARIAS SUGGESTED TO HIM A TEMPORARY TRANSFER OF POWER OCT 21, HE REACTED SHARPLY TO IDEA, SAYING THAT HE INTENDED TO CHAIR REGULAR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING OCT 24.

2. OSORIO, LIKE MANY OTHERS, BLAMED THE MARQUES DE VILLAVERDE, THE DOCTOR SON-IN-LAW, FOR FAMILY'S ATTITUDE.

THE MARQUES' INFLUENCE IN THE FAMILY AND WITH HIS FATHER-IN-LAW HAS INCREASED GREATLY SINCE HIS ILLNESS LAST SUMMER WHEN VILLAVERDE "TOOK CHARGE" OF THE SEARCH FOR SPECIALIST MEDICAL ATTENTION. FRANCO FEELS BEHOLDEN TO HIM. THE FAMILY THEREFORE, HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CONTROLLING ACCESS TO FRANCO AND, IN THE NAME OF "HUMANITARIAN CONCERN", KEEPING THE TRUTH FROM HIM.

3. ACCORDING TO OSORIO, THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO JUAN CARLOS WAS INEVITABLE, BUT IT WAS UNCLEAR HOW SOON THIS COULD BE DONE. JUAN CARLOS HAD ALREADY INDICATED HIS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT EITHER A TEMPORARY TRANSFER OF ALL POWERS OR DEFINITIVE TRANSFER OF SOME POWERS; HE WOULD ONLY ACCEPT AN UNLIMITED TRANSFER OF ALL POWERS. THE ROUTE OF DECLARING FRANCO INCAPACITATED WOULD NOT BE FOLLOWED; ALTHOUGH TWO-THIRDS OF THE CABINET AND THE COUNCIL OF THE REALITY APPROVE THE MEASURE TODAY, THE "CORTES" WHICH IS DOMINATED BY RIGHT-WING, WOULD BLOCK IT. MOREOVER, THIS PROCEDURE WOULD BE AN IGNOMINIOUS END FOR FRANCO WHICH WOULD NOT SERVE INTERESTS EVEN OF THOSE MOST INTERESTED IN EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE. IT WAS UP TO ARIAS AND THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO PERSUADE FRANCO IT WAS IN THE COUNTRY'S AND HIS OWN INTEREST TO RELINQUISH POWER. OSORIO BELIEVES THAT ARIAS, SUPPORTED BY KEY MILITARY LEADERS, WILL PRESS HARD IN COMING DAYS TO BRING FRANCO AROUND. ARIAS IS HANDICAPPED, HOWEVER, BY INCREASING PRESSURES FOR HIS OWN RESIGNATION FROM RIGHT-WING FORCES WHICH ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO ANY PREMATURE TRANSFER OF POWERS. THESE ELEMENTS HAVE ACCESS TO FRANCO

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THROUGH HIS FAMILY.

4. ARIAS HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL THE PRINCIPALS. PRIOR TO HIS 40-MINUTE MEETING WITH FRANCO OCT 21 HE HAD LUNCHEDED WITH THE CAUTIOUS, CONSERVATIVE "CORTES" PRESIDENT VALCARCEL, AND TALKED WITH JUAN CARLOS. THE SAME DAY THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE ARMY (ALL CAPTAIN GENERALS, CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL GUARD, ARMY

WAR COLLEGE HEAD, AND SEC GEN IN MINISTRY OF ARMY) HELD A
MEETING IN MADRID, COVERING THE SAHARAN ISSUE, AND
FRANCO'S CONDITION.
STABLER

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