

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 3377

S E C R E T MADRID 7409

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SP

SUBJECT: URGENT EFFORTS TO PERSUADE FRANCO TO RETIRE

REF: MADRID 7368

1. PRINCE JUAN CARLOS HAS JUST SENT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO ME THROUGH THE COUNT OF MOTRICO (ONE OF JUAN CARLOS' CLOSEST ADVISERS).
2. REFERRING TO OUR CONVERSATION YESTERDAY (REFTEL) AND HIS PROMISE TO KEEP ME INFORMED, THE PRINCE WANTED ME IMMEDIATELY TO KNOW OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.
3. FRANCO HAD SUFFERED ANOTHER HEART ATTACK EARLY THIS MORNING. AT 1400 HOURS LOCAL THIS AFTERNOON, FRANCO'S SON-IN-LAW (CRISTOBAL VALLWVERDE, WHO IS ALSO A DOCTOR AND WHO SUPERVISES FRANCO'S MEDICAL CARE) HAD COME TO SEE THE PRINCE TO INFORM HIM OF FRANCO'S LATEST ATTACK AND OF THE MEDICAL CONCLUSION THAT SERIOUS DAMAGE WAS NOW IRREVERSIBLE AND THAT FRANCO WOULD PROBABLY ONLY LAST A SHORT WHILE LONGER. VILLAVERDE ALSO TOLD THE PRINCE OF THE FAMILY'S DETERMINATION THAT FRANCO SHOULD NOW BE INDUCED TO RETIRE AND HAND OVER HIS POWERS TO JUAN CARLOS AS KING OF SPAIN.
4. VILLAVERDE AND THE PRINCE AGREED THAT THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO WOULD BE CARRIED OUT TONIGHT. AT 2000 HOURS LOCAL, THERE WOULD BE A FURTHER MEDICAL CONSULTATION

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WITH REGARD TO FRANCO'S CONDITION. FOLLOWING THAT

VILLAVERDE AND TWO OTHER DOCTORS WOULD INFORM FRANCO THAT HIS CONDITION REQUIRED THAT HE RETIRE AS CHIEF OF STATE. AFTER THIS VISIT, FRANCO'S DAUGHTER (CARMEN VILLAVERDE) WOULD THEN TALK TO HER FATHER AND RECALLING HER UNFLAGGING SUPPORT FOR HIM, URGE HIM IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL CONCERNED THAT HE SHOULD RETIRE. FOLLOWING THIS VISIT, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 2030 AND 2100, PRIME MINISTER ARIAS, PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES AND OF THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM, RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL, AND THE THREE MILITARY MINISTERS WOULD THEN GO IN TO SEE FRANCO AND PRESS HIM TO SIGN A DOCUMENT RETIRING AND TRANSFERRING THE POWERS OF CHIEF OF STATE TO JUAN CARLOS.

5. THE PRINCE ASKED VILLAVERDE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF FRANCO THEN REFUSED TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT AND VILLAVERDE SAID THAT IN THIS EVENT THE DOCTORS WOULD ISSUE A CERTIFICATE OF INCAPACITY WHICH WOULD THEN BRING INTO PLAY THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH RESPECT TO SUCCESSION, INVOLVING THE GOVERNMENT, THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND THE CORTES.

6. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, AND AS EXPECTED, FRANCO SIGNS THE DECREE RENOUNCING HIS POSITION AND TRANSFERRING THE POWERS TO THE PRINCE, THE THREE-MAN COUNCIL OF REGENCY WOULD IMMEDIATELY ASSUME THE HEADSHIP OF STATE. WITHIN 24 HOURS OR SO, THE CORTES WOULD BE CONVOKED TO BE INFORMED OF FRANCO'S RENUNCIATION OF POWER. WITHIN APPROXIMATELY 48 HOURS AND POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, JUAN CARLOS WOULD APPEAR BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND THE CORTES TO TAKE THE OATH AS KING OF SPAIN.

7. UNDER THIS SCHEDULE, JUAN CARLOS WOULD MAKE A NATION-WIDE TELEVISION ADDRESS ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, SETTING FORTH A GENERAL STATEMENT ON HIS ASSUMPTION OF THE OFFICE OF HEAD OF STATE. HE WOULD HOPE TO INCLUDE IN IT A GENERAL ORIENTATION OF A MORE OPEN AND PARTICIPATORY SPAIN.

8. IN ALL PROBABILITY, JUAN CARLOS WOULD ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND SEEK TO APPOINT AN

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ENTIRELY NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD BE AS BROADLY BASED AS POSSIBLE. WHILE IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO BRING IN ANY ELEMENTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION, INCLUDING THE SPANISH SOCIALIST PARTY (PSOE), HE WOULD ATTEMPT TO APPOINT PEOPLE WHO HAD CONTACTS WITH THAT OPPOSITION SO THAT A DIALOGUE COULD BE STARTED. HE HAD NO DEFINITE CHOICE AS YET AS TO A PRIME MINISTER, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT BE A MILITARY MAN OR ANYBODY WHO WAS AT THE

MOMENT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN HEADING AN ASSOCIATION.  
(IN THIS REGARD, THE COUNT OF MOTRICO INDICATED HE WAS  
AMONGST THOSE BEING CONSIDERED.)

9. JUAN CARLOS PROMISED THAT HE WOULD KEEP ME INFORMED  
ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY OCCUR TONIGHT.  
STABLER

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