

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8352
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USEC BRUSSELS 806

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1582

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: REACTION TO EXECUTION OF SPANISH ANARCHIST
AND POLISH SEAMAN

REF: MADRID 1434

1. EXECUTIONS OS SPANISH ANARCHIST, PUIG ANTICH, AND
POLISH SEAMAN HEINZ CHEZ, MARCH 2, FOR KILLING OF TWO
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY WAVE OF
DEMONSTRATIONS AND ATTEMPTS TO DEMONSTRATE IN VARIOUS
SPANISH UNIVERSITIES. ACCORDING TO ONE PROFESSOR AT
MADRID UNIVERSITY, SCOPE OF FERMENT EXCEEDED ANYTHING
HE HAD SEEN IN PAST SEVEN YEARS. POLICE HAVE USED PATROL
CARS, JEEPS, ARMED VEHICLES AND OVERHEAD HELICOPTERS TO
ENSURE THAT EVEN SMALLEST DEMONSTRATION DDID NOT DVELEOP
INTO MAJOR DISTRUBANCE. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS AND
CONGAN REPORT, STUDENTS HAVE UPSET BY BOYCOTTS AND DEON-
STRATIONS STUDIES IN MADRID AND BARCELONA AND TO LESSER
DEGREE IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES.

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2. PRESITIGIOUS SPANISH AUTHOR, CAMILO JOSE CELA, WHO WAS RECENTLY DESIGNATED TO HEAD THE ANTHENEUM IN MADRID WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO REOPEN IN MAY 1974, INFORMED GOS THAT, INASMUCH AS HE HAD ALWAYS OBJECTED TO DEATH SENTENCE, HE FELT HE COULD NOT KEEP COMMITMENT WITH GOS. HIS DECISION IS SETBACK FOR NEW ARIAS NAVARRO GOVERNMENT IN IST EFFORTS TO REACH INTELLECTUALS AND PROMOTE A BETTER IMAGE IN INFORMATION/CULTURAL SPHERE.

3. MADRID CONTINUES RIFE WITH RUMORS OF TENSIONS WITHIN ARIAS NAVARRO CABINET OVER DECISION TO EXECUTE PUIG ANDCHEZ, COMPLICATED BY ADDIONAL STRAINS BROUGHT ON BY CURRENT CONFRONTATION WITH CHURCH (MADRID 1470) NEW MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM, PIO CABANILLAS, WHO EARLY IN HIS TENURE BECAME KNOWN AS LEADING APERTURAISTA, REPORTEDLY WAS THINKNING OF RESIGING, AS WAS MINISTER OF JUSTICE RUIZ JARABO. RUMORS PROBABLY EFFORT BY MINISTERS OF THEIR BACKERS TO MAINTAIN FAVAORABLE PUBLIC IMAGE BUT REMAIN IN CABINET. AT SAME TIME, EMBASSY IS AWARE THAT RUIZ JARABO, BECAUSE OF GOS HANDLING OF BISHOP ANOVEROS (SEE SEPTELS), IS IN VULNERABLE POSITION AND MAY WELL BE USED AT SOME POINT AS SCAPEGOAT BY GOVERNMENT.

4. LOCAL PRESS HAS RECORDED FACTS OF DISTURBANCES IN UNIVER-SITIES AS WELL AS DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST SPANISH INSTALLATIONS, SOMETIMES INVOLVING SPANISH WORKERS, IN VARIOUS EUROPEAN CITIES BUT HAS WITHHELD COMMENTS ABOUT WISDOM OF EXECUTIONS. PRESS HAS ALSO GIVEN PROMINENCE TO REPORTS ABOUT USE OF DEATH PENALTIES IN VARIOUS COUNTIRES AND RECENT EXECUTIONS OF SEVERAL SWINDLERS IN USSR. EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS PLAYED UP THREAT OF TERRORISM IN WESTERN WORLD.

5. COMMENT: HANDLING OF THREE PENDING DEATH SENTENCES REPRESENTED CRITICAL CHOICEL FOR NEW GOVERNMENT EARLY INITIS TENURE THAT HAVE ALREADY HAD TELLING EFFECT ON ITS PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND AS WELL AS NEW GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE OF ITSELF.

6. GOVERNMENT'S SEEMINGLY COLD AND CLINICAL DECISIONS TO CARRY OUT WITHOUT HESITATION TWO OF THREE PENDING DEATH SENTENCES HAS OFFENDED MANY AMONG MODERATE AND LIBERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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SECTORS, WHO ARE INCLINED TO SEE IT AS BRUTAL ACT OF SENSE-LESS RETRIBUTION INCONSISTENT WITH POLICIES OF MODERATION AND TODLERANCE SUGGESTED BY ARIAS' FEB 12 SPEECH. THIS RESENTMENT FURTHER SHARPENED BY ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: (1) WIDESPREAD FEELING THAT DEATH PENALTY ITSELF AND METHOD OF IMPOSING IT (GARROTE) ARE STEP BACKWARD TO LESS HUMANE PERIOD THAT MANY SPANISH LIKE TO BELIEVE HAS BEEN LEFT BEHIND IN PROGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN VALUES;

(2) RESENTMENT AMONG POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL LAWYER GROUPS AND THEIR ALLIES IN OTHER PROFESSIONS AND ACADEMIA AT CONTINUED HEAVY INVOLVEMENT OF MILITARY IN GENERAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM; (3) SUSPICION--HOWEVER IRRATIONAL--AMONG SOME CATALANS THAT EXECUTION OF PUIG WAS POLITICAL OUTRAGE AIMED AT THEIR REGION AND ITS SEPARATIST PRETENSIONS. FORTUITOUSLY, EXECUTION OCCURRED AT SAME TIME GOVERNMENT CHOSE TO CONFRONT CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CONFLICT THAT COMBINES HIGHLY EMOTIONAL ISSUES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ETHNIC HONOR OF BASQUES. GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT OF CHURCH ISWUE HAS COMPOUNDED MODERATES' NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS OF ARIAS GOVERNMENT'S RIGIDITY, LACK OF COMPASSION, AND EVEN POLITICAL RECKLESSNESS.

7. BUT GOVERNMENT'S FIRMNESS OF EXECUTIONS, AND TO SOME EXTENT IN CHURCH CONFLICT, NOT INCONSISTENT WITH KNOWN ATTITUDES OF EITHER PRESIDENT ARIAS OR INTERIOR MINISTER GARCIA HERNANDEZ ON LAW AND ORDER. PUBLIC ORDER CLEARLY GOVERNMENT'S FIRST PRIORITY IN FEB 12 SPEECH, THOUGH THIS FACT MAY HAVE BEEN SUBMERGED IN GENERAL ACCLAIM FOR POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION MEASURES. OTHER COMMENTS OF ARIAS AND INITIAL SPEECHES OF GARCIA HERNANDEZ, COUPLED WITH PRACTICAL STEPS TO REORGANIZE AND STRENGTHEN SECURITY FORCES, LEAVE LITTLE DOUBT PUBLIC ORDER HAS ALWAYS BEEN FIRST PRIORITY. PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S VERY ORIGIN LINKED TO TERRORIST ASSASSINATION OF MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE, EVENT THAT STILL UPPERMOST IN SPANISH MIND. IN THEIR COMMENTS, ARIAS AND GARCIA HERNANDEZ HAVE DEVELOPED THEME THAT FIRMNESS IN ENFORCING PUBLIC ORDER IS COMPLEMENTARY--NOT ANTITHETICA--TO PROPER POLITICA LIBERALIZATION.

8. EVIDENCE LACKING THAT DECISION TO EXECUTE PUIG SHAPED BY DIRECT MILITARY OR POLICE PRESSURE. GIVEN CONCERN OF CONFIDENTIAL

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KEY GOVERNMENT FIGURES FOR PUBLIC SECURITY AND THEIR PAST CLOSE LINKS WITH SECURITY FORCES, DOUBTFUL SUCH DIRECT PRESSURE WOULD BE NECESSARY. GOVERNMENT AWARE, HOWEVER, OF IMPORTANCE FOR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH SECURITY FORCES IN ESTABLISHING IMAGE OF TOUGHNESS AT OUTSET. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT GOVERNMENT, IN OPTING FOR QUICK EXECUTION, DEEPLY INFLUENCED BY WHAT THEY CONSTRUED AS LESSON OF 1970 BURGOS TRIALS, SPECIFICALLY THAT GOVERNMENT'S VACILLATION AND ULTIMATE GRANT OF CLEMENCY AT THAT TIME HAD SERIOUSLY DISTURBED ARMY, POLICE AND THEIR CONSERVATIVE ALLIES BUT FAILED TO APPEASE OPPOSITION AND EVEN PROVIDED GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AGITATION.

9. HANDLING OF EXECUTIONS ALSO ONE MORE SIGN THAT THIS GOVERNMENT LESS CONCERNED THAN ITS PREDECESSOR ABOUT

ITS IMAGE IN EUROPE. LOCAL COMMENTATORS IN PRESS HAVE
RECENTLY ATTACKED POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN WEST EUROPE AS OUTDATED
AND INEFFECTUAL AND CURRENT POLITICAL DISARRAY AMONG
WESTERN EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS MDAE PROSPECT OF SHARP REACTION
TO SPANISH EXECUTIONS LESSMENACING. SIMILARLY, NEW
GOVERNMENT LITTLE CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE STRONG REACTION
IN US, WHICH THEY PRECEIVE ARE SHARING GOS DEEP CONCERN
OVER TERRORISM AND INCREASINGLY INCLINED TO RESUME CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT TO COPE WITH IT.
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