

POOL REPORTPool # 3

Airport into City - Madrid, Spain  
May 31, 1975

Driving from airport into city about an hour before the President, there was no crowd to speak of except Civil Guards spaced about every 100 yards along the road and, in the city, soldiers spaced about every 20 yards. A good sized crowd, six to 10 deep, which local AP man estimated at 4,000 was gathered around edge of Plaza Cibeles, where key ceremony was performed.

Crowd was kept well back by soldiers and police, and probably no more than a couple hundred could see the ceremony which took place in narrow space between camera platform and backdrop of burgundy curtain. The circular plaza was festive with large fountain in center, U.S. and Spanish flags flapping in breeze from every lamppost, and music playing over loudspeakers. Some city officials looked like playing cards, in scarlet and gold tunics, white ruffles and white plumed hats.

Pool counted at least six sets of security forces: soldiers in green uniforms and helmets, with bayonets fixed on rifles; police in gray uniforms and caps, with pistols at hip; Franco's personal guards, in khaki uniforms with red berets, carrying Spanish-made Cetme submachine guns; Franco's horse guard, in blue-gray tunics, white capes, silver pointed helmets, carrying lances; a few Civil Guards, in khaki with special flat black shiny hats and submachine guns; and finally, 10 members of the municipal guard in blue tunics, white pants, black boots, and purple-plumed hats, carrying swords. Local AP said six battalions of soldiers (1,800 men) were supposed to be deployed.

Only banners pool could see were one reading "Viva Ford" and another saying "Gracias Franco, Cuenta con Argonda" (which means "Count on Argonda" a small village 25 km outside Madrid where you can buy 60 litres of wines for about \$5.00.)

Mayor Miguel Angel Garcia-Lomas and his wife arrived at 11:10 am -- an hour before Ford scheduled to arrive. However, Presidential motorcade began to reach the plaza at noon, 10 minutes early. A motorcycle escorted and Spanish and American security men preceded the closed black Rolls Royce in which Ford and Franco rode from the airport. Wives followed in another closed black limousine. Ford was wearing dark blue suit, white shirt, and blue and white striped tie bareheaded. Franco was in khaki uniform with red sash and military cap. Foreign Minister Pedro Cortina and Kissinger were present at the ceremony.

The mayor greeted Ford and then Franco, and then read a two minute speech in Spanish, while Mrs. Franco, Franco, Ford and Mrs. Ford, lined up left to right in front of him. After the speech an aide brought a large gold key (about six inches long) in a silver and red plush box and gave it to the mayor, who gave the key to Ford. A translator gave the speech over in English. Essentially, it welcomed Ford to Madrid, expressed "feelings of mutual esteem between the peoples of the United States and Spain," and asked Ford to accept the key "as a symbol of our warm esteem and hopes for a happy visit."

Ford delivered his speech as written, except to add the words "and at home" after "...completely welcome."

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After Ford finished his remarks, he and Franco and the rest of their entourage formed up for the parade. They stood in the rear of an open black Rolls Royce with green leather seats, Ford on Franco's right. The President towered over the generalissimo, grinning broadly and waving vigorously. Franco occasionally lifted his right hand to his head in a half-wave, half-salute.

Ford was preceded by Franco's personal horse escort, moving slowly along Avenida of Jose Antonio. The lead horseman occasionally ordered the pool trucks to move at a faster pace. Behind him was a unit of men on brown horses, followed by guards blowing bugles astride white horses. Most of the remainder of the unit was divided into two single-file groups, one on each side of the broad avenue. But one horseman shielded the President alongside the rolls, and another shielded Franco. Directly behind the limousine were three more horsemen. Four security cars also flanked the President's car.

The crowd was lined along the sidewalks, five to ten deep. As the limousine passed, they clapped and some people shouted "Franco, Franco." Ten to twelve-story buildings flanked the avenue, and Spaniards clung from balconies and peered out of windows from each floor, waving hands and handkerchiefs. Uniformed troops were periodically stationed on the rooftops, rifles and automatic weapons at the ready. Soldiers armed with bayoneted rifles also were stationed every ten yards on each side of the avenue. Loudspeakers blared martial music from lampposts, drowning out the buglists. Each lamppost was festooned with Spanish and American flags, and huge red and gold banners were suspended high over the street.

As the procession neared the Plaza Hotel, the Queen Mary, with Secret Service agents standing on the running boards, speeded up and passed Franco's limousine. At the hotel, the horsemen halted, and a Squad of motorcyclists replaced them. The pool halted immediately past the hotel, and Ford and Franco, still standing drove slowly up the tree-lined avenue.

Only one sign was spotted. It said "wave to us; we're Americans." But the crowd was friendly. There were smiles on virtually all the faces of onlookers as the limousine passed, accompanied by prolonged applause.

Bob Boyd Knight Newspapers  
Dean Fischer Time Magazine

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