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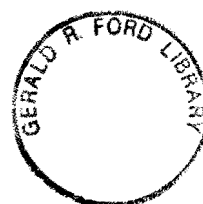
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WHM, 12/19/84

RON NESSEN

EYES ONLY



SPAIN AFTER FRANCO

Spanish officials, including Prime Minister Arias, believe that General Franco has less than 24 hours to live. [REDACTED] has asked the archbishop of Madrid to prepare a funeral sermon as soon as possible. [REDACTED]

Arias met with Franco yesterday to discuss turning over the powers of chief of state to Prince Juan Carlos. [REDACTED] Arias argued that the transition must be made immediately and unconditionally. Franco, however, desired to transfer his powers provisionally, as he did in July 1974. Juan Carlos reportedly will not accept this condition.

Government spokesmen, probably in an effort to keep from the public the gravity of Franco's illness, continue to report that he is recovering. Similar efforts were made in 1974.

Franco's death—or complete incapacitation—will come at a time when the deep divisions within Spain are more evident than ever. For the moment, at least, the shock of his death—although certainly not unexpected—plus the Spanish sense of propriety and pride will probably overcome the divisions in the country sufficiently to permit the carefully planned transition to be effected largely as intended.

The succession law of 1969 stipulates that Prince Juan Carlos will become chief of state (king) within eight days after Franco dies or is declared incapacitated. In the interim, power will be assumed in Juan Carlos' name by a Regency Council composed of a senior member of parliament, a church official, and a military man. Juan Carlos also will inherit Franco's position as supreme commander of the armed forces, but in the king's case, exercise of this function is expected to be symbolic.

Juan Carlos will have neither the personal prestige nor the legal foundation to exercise the absolute power Franco has wielded for almost four decades. An annex to the Organic Law of 1967—one of seven Fundamental Laws which as a group comprise the constitution—prescribes that Franco's special powers will lapse with the implementation of the Law of Succession.

Unlike Franco, Juan Carlos must share power with others in the government, particularly the prime minister or "President of the Government." The Organic Law states that all decisions taken by the head of state must be countersigned either by the prime minister, another minister whose office is involved in the decision, the president of the Cortes (the legislature), or the president of the Council of the Realm, a 17-member senior advisory body. Despite such limitations, Juan Carlos will have more power than any other Western constitutional monarch.

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The term of Prime Minister Arias does not expire until January 1979, but Arias told a Spanish official he will resign upon Franco's death. Juan Carlos may request that he remain in office for the sake of continuity and the appearance of stability.

A Divided Establishment

A majority of highly placed Spaniards recognize that their society needs to be freer, but they are divided over how free it should be, and at what pace freedom should be introduced. Differences on these matters are spread unevenly over the main sectors of the establishment.

The church, for example, has been in the vanguard of those seeking to promote social and political change, so much so in fact that the Spanish episcopate barely qualifies any longer as part of the establishment.

The great bulk of the officer corps is conservative; a small percentage is ultraconservative. Most reports portray the military as interested primarily in maintaining order. There are indications, however, that some junior officers are talking more openly than heretofore about the merits of a sound democratic system. Organized political activity within the military is banned, but we have received reports that some junior officers favor rapid liberal social change for Spain and are interested in the Portuguese example.

Political figures, who make up another important segment of the establishment, have had very little experience in organizing in such a way as to appeal to a constituency. They have concentrated on developing close ties to Franco, who has been the source of all power.

Politics have been changing slowly since the authorization of political associations (quasi-parties) in January 1975. Two of the more significant associations are the Spanish Democratic Union, a moderate Catholic-oriented group under former cabinet minister Federico Silva Munoz, and the Union of Spanish People, a rightist group under the head of Franco's National Movement, Jose Solis Ruiz.

All members of the establishment, including bureaucrats, financiers, and industrialists, will want to maintain their privileges. They will all cooperate, therefore, with Juan Carlos and Arias to arrange an orderly transition.

Such people will soon disagree over what parts of Franco's system should be preserved and what should be liberalized. Their disagreements may make it easier for the illegal opposition to enter politics openly. The various political groups that make up the illegal opposition are more interested in dismantling Franco's system than in altering it.



The Illegal Opposition

The absence of free political activity—elections, rallies, mass meetings—makes it difficult to estimate popular support for the parties that have existed illegally. It is apparent that they have some appeal among youth, intellectuals, and workers. It is also clear that the parties are divided. There are, for example, two national and three regional Christian Democratic parties and at least three rival Socialist parties.

The Spanish Communist Party, in organizational terms if not in numbers, is the strongest party in the illegal opposition. It exercises considerable influence in the labor movement because of its control of the Workers' Commissions. It has support in the universities and is said to have good connections in the media. The Communists have tried without much success to form a popular front of political parties, but they probably will renew their efforts.

The Spanish Communist Party has been led for many years by Santiago Carrillo, who makes his headquarters in Paris. He has maintained considerable independence from Moscow and, like the Italian Communists, strongly criticized the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. These positions have caused considerable hostility between Carrillo and his Portuguese counterparts, who have always supported Moscow's policies.

Regionalism

It is reasonable to assume that pressures for regional self-rule will increase in the post-Franco period. The Basque people, who occupy four provinces in the north, and the Catalan, who live in four provinces in the northeast, will press hard for a greater voice in running their own affairs. The populations of both areas feel discriminated against culturally and economically, but this sentiment is especially strong—and better organized—in the Basque region.

Most Basques would be satisfied with greater autonomy rather than a complete break with Madrid. The Basque terrorist organization wants immediate and complete independence from Madrid, and it has used and will continue to use violence to achieve this goal.

Basque terrorists, together with members of the Antifascist Patriotic Revolutionary Front who are committed to the violent overthrow of the government, will be as serious a problem for Juan Carlos as they have been for Franco during the latter days of his rule.

Foreign Relations

Although Spanish officials will be concerned primarily with the orderly transfer of power and the domestic effects of Franco's death, Spain's foreign relations cannot be ignored for even a short period of time. Madrid, for example, must still complete negotiations on the future of US bases in the country. Some Spaniards may now be tempted to hold out for more advantageous terms, but the majority will not want to alienate the US at such a time.

There will probably be no change in the post-Franco period in Madrid's decision to withdraw from Spanish Sahara peacefully if possible. Spanish officials probably will reinforce this point with Rabat to avoid any rash action on the part of those Moroccans who believe that Spain is preoccupied with the transfer of power.

Madrid's effort to pursue closer ties with Western Europe, set back sharply by the recent anti-Franco demonstrations abroad, is likely to meet with greater success. Most of Europe would be anxious to give Spain's new leaders a chance. (SECRET)

