

# CIA leader in talks with Spain's 'reforms' general

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Lieutenant-General Vernon Walters, deputy chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, was here last week for a meeting with a controversial Spanish general who was removed from his post last year for advocating deep reforms of the Spanish dictatorship.

Although it is not known whether Walters, considered an expert on Iberian affairs, met any members of the tolerated Spanish opposition, some of its members had been quietly alerted that the American general would be in Spain on June 15, 16, and 17, and would like to discuss current Spanish developments and what to expect in the post-Franco era. The United States is concerned not only about the transition, but about the future of its military bases here.

Sources confirmed that General Walters talked with Lieutenant-General Manuel Diez Alegria, former head of the general staff, General Franco (82), relieved Diez Alegria of his key intelligence and planning post last summer after reports that he felt the time had come to dismantle the authoritarian régime to avoid bloodshed after Franco leaves the scene.

Walters has become actively interested in the Iberian peninsula since the coup in Portugal

on April 25, 1974. In August last year he visited Portugal to assess the left-wing thrust of the Portuguese revolution for the Secretary of State, Dr Kissinger. He was urged to visit Spain's neighbour by the former US Ambassador, Mr Koming Anderson, a retired US naval admiral, who is his close friend.

It is not known whether during his stay in Madrid, Walters saw Mr Frank Carlucci, US ambassador to Portugal, who was receiving treatment in the US hospital at Torrejon air force base near here.

There was no indication that Walters had had any meetings with right-wing Portuguese exiles living here, but the US intelligence community has shown an interest in Spanish assessment of developments in Portugal.

The American intelligence officer, however, had talks with the US ambassador, Mr Wells Stabler, and with some Spanish officials, including Lieutenant-General Carlos Vallespin, Diez Alegria's successor.

Diez Alegria has a reputation for being an intellectual, and is a close friend of Don Juan. Recently the politically-active retired officer has travelled throughout Spain for meetings with dissident factions. His contacts include not only Social

Democrats but members of the democratic junta, a coalition of liberal Roman Catholics, bankers, lawyers, and outlawed Communists. He has been tipped as the Prime Minister of the first post-Franco Government, but he has disclaimed any such ambition.

Sources said that the Spanish general and the American general were old friends. There have been hints that the Spanish military collaborate closely with US intelligence, and that the CIA has obtained important information from Spanish sources about Latin America, particularly Cuba and Chile. Diez Alegria was in Chile just before the military coup against President Allende.

In recent months Spaniards, because of US press reports of CIA activities, have become increasingly wary of the CIA presence in Spain. Important liberal corporate lawyers, in effect, have gone so far as to allege that the US Chamber of Commerce here was a CIA vehicle.

After the Portuguese revolution 16 months ago, many Spaniards compared Diez Alegria to General Spinola, the monocled cavalry officer who became first President of the post-dictatorship Lisbon régime. At the time, Diez Alegria began to receive monocles in his mail.—Washington Post