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SPAIN: Change in High Command

The replacement possibility of the Junta chief of staff and his staff will help the government deal more effectively with military developments, but other national problems remain a threat to the country.

Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo declared the action would be helpful before Spain begins negotiations on entry into NATO. The move follows months of antigovernment agitation by junior and field-grade Army officers.

The approaching trials of those implicated in the coup attempt of February 1981 are bound to heighten civil-military tensions. This prospect also impelled the government to act.

Comment: The new chiefs probably will have greater support from the ranks than did their predecessors. They probably also will enjoy a closer relationship with the King,

The new chiefs of staff tend to be strongly nationalistic, but they are not likely to oppose plans to join NATO or to push for changes in relations with the US.

The staff changes should help Calvo Sotelo weather controversy produced by the trials, but his cabinet still faces other challenges. Imminent decisions on public education and regional autonomy threaten to split his minority government and cost him the parliamentary support of regional parties.

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