

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7461

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ELAB, SP
SUBJ: MODERATE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST
OPPOSITIONISTS ARRESTED AT MEETING

BEGIN SUMMARY: POLICE ARRESTED ON NOV 26 SEVERAL
PROMINENT NATIONAL LEADERS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND
SOCIALIST GROUPS WHILE LATTER WERE MEETING IN MADRID TO
DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A NON-COMMUNIST
"CONFERENCIA DEMOCRATICA", WHICH MIGHT PROVE A FORMIDABLE
RIVAL TO THE COMMUNIST-BACKED "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA" IN
PARIS. POLICE DID NOT ACT (PERHAPS DELIBERATELY), HOWEVER, UNTIL
MOST PROMINENT OPPOSITIONIST PRESENT, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND
ONE-TIMEFRANCO CABINET MINISTER JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ, HAD LEFT
MEETING. ARRESTS ARE FIRST SUCH ACTION AGAINST MODERATE
OPPOSITION GROUPS IN SOME TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. ON NOV 26 POLICE ARRESTED 14 PROMINENT MODERATE
OPPOSITIONISTS REPRESENTING FOUR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND
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AT LEAST THREE SOCIALIST GROUPS, WHILE THEY WERE MEETING

AT THE LAW OFFICES OF ONE OF THEIR MEMBERS IN A MADRID RESIDENTIAL AREA. AMONG THE GROUPS REPRESENTED WERE THE INDEPENDENT (IDC) GROUPING OF JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ, THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN (DSC) GROUP OF JOSE MARIA GIL ROBLES, THE CATALAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPING (UDC) THE BASQUE NATIONALIST CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PNV), THE "YOUNG TURK" PSOE SOCIALIST PARTY, THE MSC CATALAN REGIONALIST SOCIALIST PARTY, AND THE NEWLY RECONSTITUTED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GROUPING (USDE) OF DIONISIO RIDRUEJO.

2. AMONG PROMINENT MODERATE OPPOSITION LEADERS ARRESTED WERE JOSE MARIA GIL ROBLES, THE SON OF THE CATHOLIC CENTRIST LEADER DURING THE REPUBLIC, JAIME CORTEZO, SECRETARY OF IDC AND PRINCIPAL LIEUTENANT OF JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ; ANTONIO CANELLAS, PRINCIPAL LEADER OF CATALAN UDC; JUAN AJURRIAGUERRA OCHANDIANO, A BASQUE PNV LEADER, FELIPE GONZALEZ MARQUEZ, NEWLY ELECTED FIRST SECRETARY OF "YOUNG TURK" SOCIALIST PSOE; NICOLAS REDONDO, PRINCIPAL WORKER MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOTH OF "YOUNG TURK" SOCIALIST PSOE PARTY AND UGT TRADE UNION; JOSE PALLACH, PRINCIPAL LEADER OF CATALAN SOCIALIST MSC; DIONISIO RIDRUEJO, LEADER OF NEW USDE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GROUPING (WHICH IS PRIMARILY A RECONSTITUTION OF RIDRUEJO'S OLD LIBERAL "ACCION DEMOCRATICA" PARTY); AND ANTONIO GARCIA LOPEZ, PRINCIPAL LIEUTENANT OF RIDRUEJO IN NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GROUP. JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ, LEADER OF IDC, WAS ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING. HOWEVER ARRESTS TOOK PLACE 10 MINUTES AFTER RUIZ GIMENEZ HAD EXCUSED HIMSELF AND LEFT THE MEETING EARLY FOR ANOTHER COMMITMENT, AND THUS RUIZ GIMENEZ WAS NOT AMONG THOSE DETAINED. REPORTEDLY ALL THOSE DETAINED WERE STILL BEING HELD AS OF THIS MORNING, ALTHOUGH IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL OR MOST OF THEM WILL BE RELEASED ON PROVISIONAL LIBERTY TODAY OR TOMORROW.

3. ACCORDING TO OPPOSITION SOURCES, PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE FORMATION OF LONG-AWAITED "CONFERENCIA DEMOCRATICA" WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A DEMOCRATIC COUNTER-WEIGHT TO THE "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA" IN PARIS FORMED IN JULY
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BY COMMUNIST SEC GEN SANTIAGO CARRILLO IN COMBINATION WITH A FEW DEMOCRATIC AND BOURGEOIS SPANISH GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE MOST PROMINENT PERSON PRESENT, JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ, WAS NOT ARRESTED, AND IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT POLICE DELIBERATELY WAITED UNTIL RUIZ GIMENEZ LEFT BEFORE

MAKING ARRESTS TO AVOID THE OUTCRY THAT WOULD ARISE FROM THE ARREST OF A ONE-TIME FRANCO CABINET MINISTER AND PROMINENT INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC FIGURE. HOWEVER, SHOULD AUTHORITIES SEEK TO KEEP ANY OR ALL OF THOSE ARRESTED IN DETENTION FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME, INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY FROM FOREIGN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST PARTIES AND GROUPS IN WESTERN EUROPE WOULD BE SEVERE. THUS IT BELIEVED LIKELY THOSE DETAINED WILL SOON BE FREED ON PROVISIONAL LIBERTY SO AS TO STILL ANY INTERNATIONAL PROTESTS.

5. IT IS ALSO GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT POLICE MUST HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THIS CLANDESTINE MEETING THROUGH AN INFORMANT. THERE IS SOME SUSPICION THAT THE INFORMANT MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN ANTONIO GARCIA LOPEZ, THE LAWYER IN WHOSE OFFICE MEETING WAS TAKING PLACE, AND A PERSON SOMETIMES ACCUSED BY OPPOSITIONISTS IN PAST YEARS OF BEING A POLICE INFORMANT. ADDING FUEL TO THIS THEORY IS ONE VERSION THAT GARCIA LOPEZ HIMSELF MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, ALTHOUGH PRESS AND OTHER REPORTS LIST HIM AS AMONG THOSE DETAINED.

6. ARRESTS ARE A SET BACK TO HOPES OF SEVERAL OF MODERATE OPPOSITION GROUPS AT MEETING TO FORM NON-COMMUNIST "CONFERENCIA DEMOCRATICA", AN IDEA WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN STUDYING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. REPORTEDLY MEETING WAS FIRST OF ALL DIFFERENT POSSIBLE GROUPS INTERESTED IN SUCH AN ALLIANCE. IN THIS RESPECT ARRESTS MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT SHORTSIGHTED ON PART OF GOVT AS ARRESTS MAY BENEFIT THE RIVAL JUNTA DEMOCRATICA, WHICH WOULD LIKE TO ATTRACT THESE SAME GROUPS TO ITSELF AND HOPES FOR THE FAILURE OF ANY EFFORTS TO FORM A ANTI-JUNTA COUNTERWEIGHT GROUPING WITHOUT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION.
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7. EVEN IF THOSE ARRESTED ARE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY, EFFECT INTERNATIONALLY IS BOUND TO BE NEGATIVE, INASMUCH AS GROUPS REPRESENTED HAVE STRONG INTERNATIONAL TIES (E.G. YOUNG TURK PSOE IS A MEMBER OF SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND FOUR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPS, I.E., IDC, DSC, PNV, AND UDC, ARE ALL MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERATION. IRONICALLY LATTER ORGANIZATION HELD MEETING IN PARIS THIS PAST WEEK END WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY LEADERS OF EACH OF FOUR SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPS, INCLUDING JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ.

8. ARRESTS OF THESE LEADING MODERATE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST FIGURES IS FIRST SUCH SIZEABLE ACTION AGAINST

MODERATE OPPOSITION GROUPS IN SOME YEARS.

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