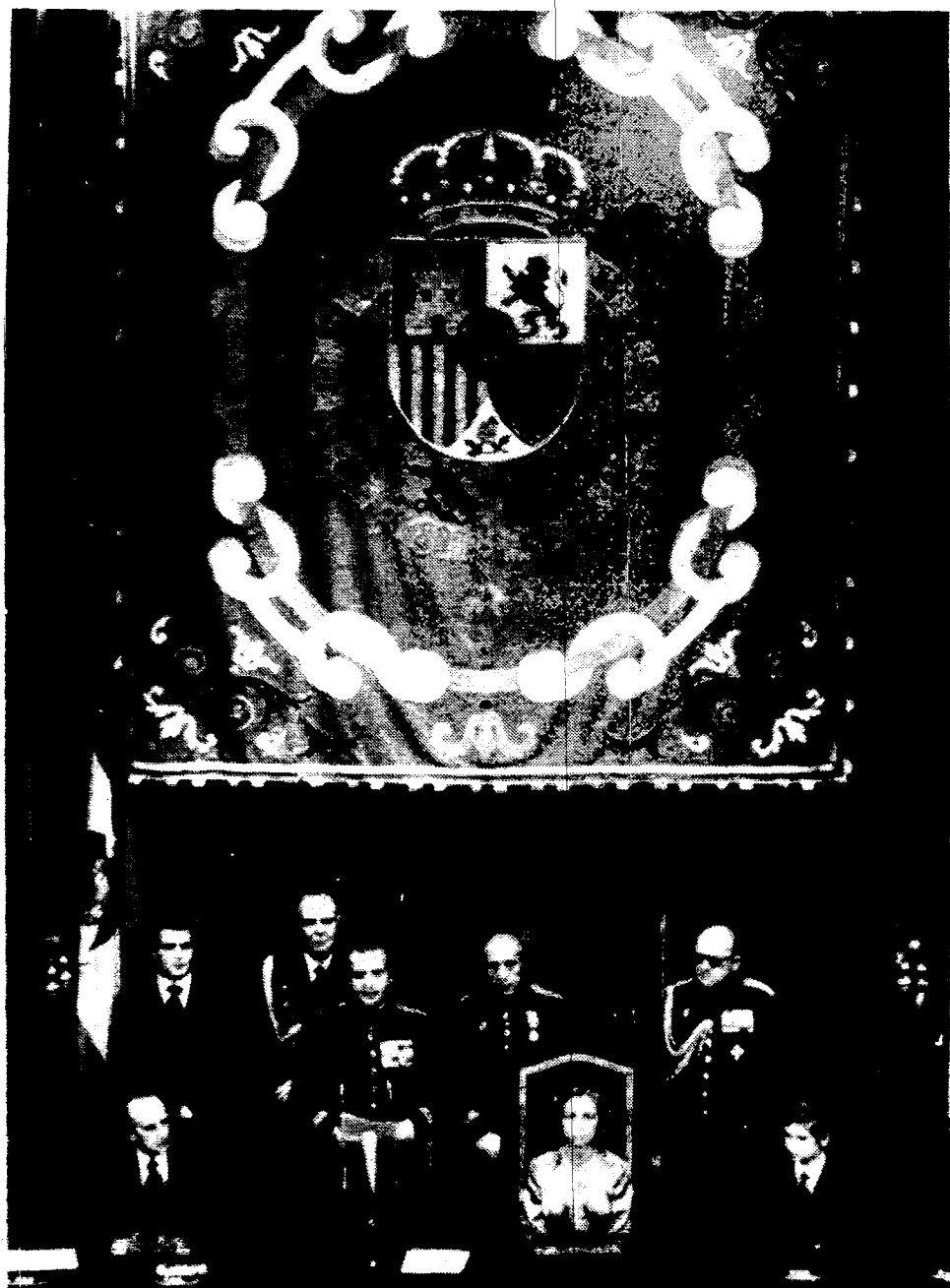


## SPAIN

# Monarch strikes a blow for democracy



When King Juan Carlos signed Spain's new constitution in 1978, there was some doubt about his commitment to the republic.

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**G**UARDIA CIVIL COLONEL ANTONIO TEJERO MOLINA'S Feb. 23 overnight putsch demonstrated that dangerously little real life has been breathed into Spain's formal democracy. When the colonel and his troops captured the whole Congress as it was about to vote a

new prime minister into office and instead called for a military takeover, the population did not rush into the streets to defend its elected leaders. Spain's public life ceased. On the surface, absolutely nothing happened. Spanish television went off the air, the radio broadcast only classical music. After seven hours, his majesty Juan Carlos appeared briefly on television to assert his authority and the existing constitutional legality. Democracy was saved by one man, and a

king at that.

By next morning, the king had persuaded Colonel Tejero to surrender and the putsch was over. But the public could only wonder what had been promised in the king's all-night negotiations with his military commanders. Had Juan Carlos made concessions to the ultras? Or, on the contrary, would the abortive putsch help him carry through a much-needed purge of the armed forces, especially the Guardia Civil?

Colonel Tejero is a familiar hothead who first attracted attention in 1977 by opposing legalization of the Basque flag. He was arrested in November 1978 for plotting to capture Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez and his cabinet to force Juan Carlos to install a rightist government (called the "Galaxia plot" after the Madrid cafe where it was hatched). Back on active duty after a year in jail, Tejero was certainly encouraged by more powerful military officers. In an "appeal to the Spanish people" issued at dawn on Feb. 24, Tejero claimed to be under orders from Gen. Jaime Milans del Bosch, 65, commander of the Valencia region, the only officer to declare a state of emergency during the crisis.

Milans del Bosch is about as far right as it's possible to get. A hero of the Franco side of the civil war who was later decorated by the Nazis with the Iron Cross, he has served as Spanish military attaché in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. "Democratic" Spain has never managed to remove men like these from important command positions. After the putsch, he was removed and arrested.

But the conspiracy seemed to extend far beyond such conspicuous extremists. More surprising was the dismissal of deputy army chief of staff Gen. Alfonso Armada Comyn, a "moderate" who was Juan Carlos' military instructor for years before becoming his administrative secretary.

Was Tejero's putsch a trial balloon, like the abortive June 1973 putsch against Allende in Chile, which helped show "loyal" officers like Pinochet how to go about it? In Spain it would apparently be so easy it may not be worth it. The legal, democratic left seemed incapable of offering the slightest resistance, whereas the military men's main enemy, the Basque terrorists of ETA, are already out-

lawed and seem to thrive on repression.

ETA's military branch has been goading the rightist officers into a coup by assassinating the generals from time to time, apparently following the horrendous strategy of "the worse things get, the better." But the military have goaded back. When ETA murdered the engineer in charge of the Lemóniz nuclear power plant Feb. 6, the widespread public outrage from the Basque population itself, coming on the heels of a fairly successful visit by Juan Carlos, seemed to lay the ground at last for isolating ETA terrorists and persuading the Basques to play along with gradual, peaceful steps to autonomy. But this was turned around one week later by the death from torture of an imprisoned ETA suspect, Jose Arregui. The military thus threw ETA the fresh martyr it needed to justify its campaign of terrorism.

The timing of the democratization has been unfortunate, coinciding with growing unemployment and inflation unchecked by unpopular austerity measures. Fascism under Franco was the enthusiasm of privileged classes, of a military caste and reactionary Catholicism. Part of the privileged classes, notably the most advanced financial and business circles, decisively came around to preference for a moderate parliamentary democracy under the reign of Juan Carlos. But during the Suarez government, stagflation has created something new: a plebeian nostalgia for Franco. Grumbling is rising from the poorer classes that blames democracy for economic troubles and for Basque terrorism.

The parliamentary left, Socialist and Communist, hoped its self-restraint would help legitimize democratic government under Suarez so it could move gently from "center" to, perhaps, center-left, with Socialist Felipe Gonzalez. Instead, it has abruptly moved to the right. The left suddenly appears out of the real play of political power, which remains strangely obscure, secret. The public does not understand why Adolfo Suarez unexpectedly resigned as prime minister last Jan. 29, or why his party, the Union of the Democratic Center, decided to replace him by right-winger Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo.

The democratic left parties seem passive and powerless, while what the fascist officers call the "country's real institu-

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## FOREIGN POLICY

## All empires are created equal

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**A**MERICA'S EUROPEAN ALLIES seemed to fall into line at Haig's first crack of the whip over Central America. The European Economic Community (EEC) cancelled emergency food shipments to starving Salvadoran peasants as requested by Haig after his emissary Lawrence Eagleburger toured European capitals with "documentary proof" the hungry people were being armed by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

But the Europeans were hedging. EEC commissioner Gaston Thorn turned around and said that Europeans' "prudence" and "comprehension of what the U.S. is saying" in no way altered Europeans' "determination" to aid the people of El Salvador. He expressed confidence in the Red Cross and other international relief agencies to deliver the promised half-million-dollars worth of food and other aid to the right people—whatever that means.

Flattered by Haig's praise for France's exemplary strategy in Africa, the French government was first to grant official credibility to U.S. proof of Soviet interference in El Salvador. French foreign minister Jean Francois-Poncet expressed disapproval and compared U.S. problems in Central America to French experience in Africa. But not every European country can be won over by U.S. recognition of a parallel empire in Africa.

In Bonn, Philip Agee gave a press conference to warn that the U.S. was concocting "another Vietnam" in El Salvador. Drawing on his past CIA experience, Agee said the documents being trotted around Europe by Eagleburger looked like typical black propaganda forgeries. For example, he said the "captured report" attributed to the El Salvador Communist Party leader was far too precise and detailed to have been dispatched through a country at war.

But the credibility that matters is surely not that of the "captured documents" so much as of Haig's introductory promise to sort out and reward America's "real friends," using El Salvador as the test. Those who fail can expect trouble.

European television has run a number of documentary films on life behind the guerrilla lines in El Salvador. It is quite obvious that even if their weapons—hardly impressive—were supplied by nefarious Cubans, Vietnamese and Russians, the strong desire to use them stems from purely local conditions. Europeans know perfectly well the U.S. is as capable of forging documents to prove Soviet involvement in Central America as the USSR was capable of forging proof

of U.S. and Chinese involvement in revolts in Afghanistan. And in neither case can such involvement, even if real, be the cause of the problem.

What is striking is the perfect symmetry between the justifications being cited by the U.S. for its interference in El Salvador and Soviet justification for the invasion of Afghanistan. Indirectly, the U.S. is supporting the Soviet position in Afghanistan by using exactly the same imperial reasoning.

Even more alarming, this is the very kind of reasoning, complete with "evidence," that the USSR will use if and when it moves to crush the free labor movement in Poland. Thus the U.S. is also indirectly encouraging the Russians to invade Poland. After all, the Reagan administration has no stake in the Polish labor movement and could get much more political mileage out of Soviet beastliness. The definitive breakdown of European detente that would result would at least offer the Reagan administration some consolation in tightening the Atlantic Alliance.

How well the Socialist International would resist the U.S. diplomatic offensive was not immediately clear, since its member parties are mostly in opposition. French Socialist Party spokeswoman Veronique Neiertz accused the French government of opportunism and reiter-

International support for the El Salvador member, the National Revolutionary Movement. Sources close to S.I. leadership denied U.S. press reports that the Dominican Revolutionary Party had joined the Costa Rican National Liberation Party in dissenting from S.I. regional policy. The Dominican member has not changed its position, the sources said, adding that there was no real split in S.I. ranks, but that the Costa Rican member party is facing elections it hopes to win and is particularly sensitive to U.S. pressure at this time.

It is no secret to anyone that one purpose of Socialist International support to Central American revolutionary movements has been to provide them with an alternative to Soviet bloc aid in hopes of keeping them within the Western economic and political system. If the Reagan administration were solely concerned with stopping Soviet subversion, it could welcome these initiatives. Instead, it seems determined to assert unique U.S. control of Central America—the largest oil-producing region after the Middle East.

If the U.S. military controls both the Middle East and Central America, then until the oil era runs out European and Japanese industry—and competition—will be at the mercy of the United States. European leaders are acutely aware of this, but not one of them will breathe a

There is a striking symmetry between U.S. justifications for intervening in El Salvador and the Soviets' rationalizations for the invasion of Afghanistan.

ated socialist solidarity with the Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador, whose president Umberto Ungo is a member of the Socialist International. Dissenting noises issued from the coalition government in Bonn, whose overall meekness was ascribed by Social Democrats to Free Democrat (liberal) Dietrich Genscher's control of the foreign ministry. The West German government was reportedly trying to put itself in a position to mediate between the U.S., the El Salvador armed forces (considered the only real power within the junta), the Catholic Church and the Revolutionary Democratic Front.

European Social Democrats seemed to be waiting for encouragement from the Feb. 28 regional meeting of Central American S.I. member parties theoretically expected to reaffirm existing Socialist

word in public about this taboo subject.

European caution is easy to understand. Europe has that much less interest in angering Washington since the U.S. might succeed in tightening its grip on world oil supplies. Europe cannot possibly counter U.S. domination by military means. Everything thus depends first of all on the strength of the popular resistance to American imperialism in Central America itself, and secondarily on broad public support in Europe—and in the United States—for such resistance. There is a natural coincidence of interest between Europe and democratic movements in Central America, which eventually may find important political and even material expression in social democratic leadership, but only if that leadership is prodded from below by a strong popular movement.



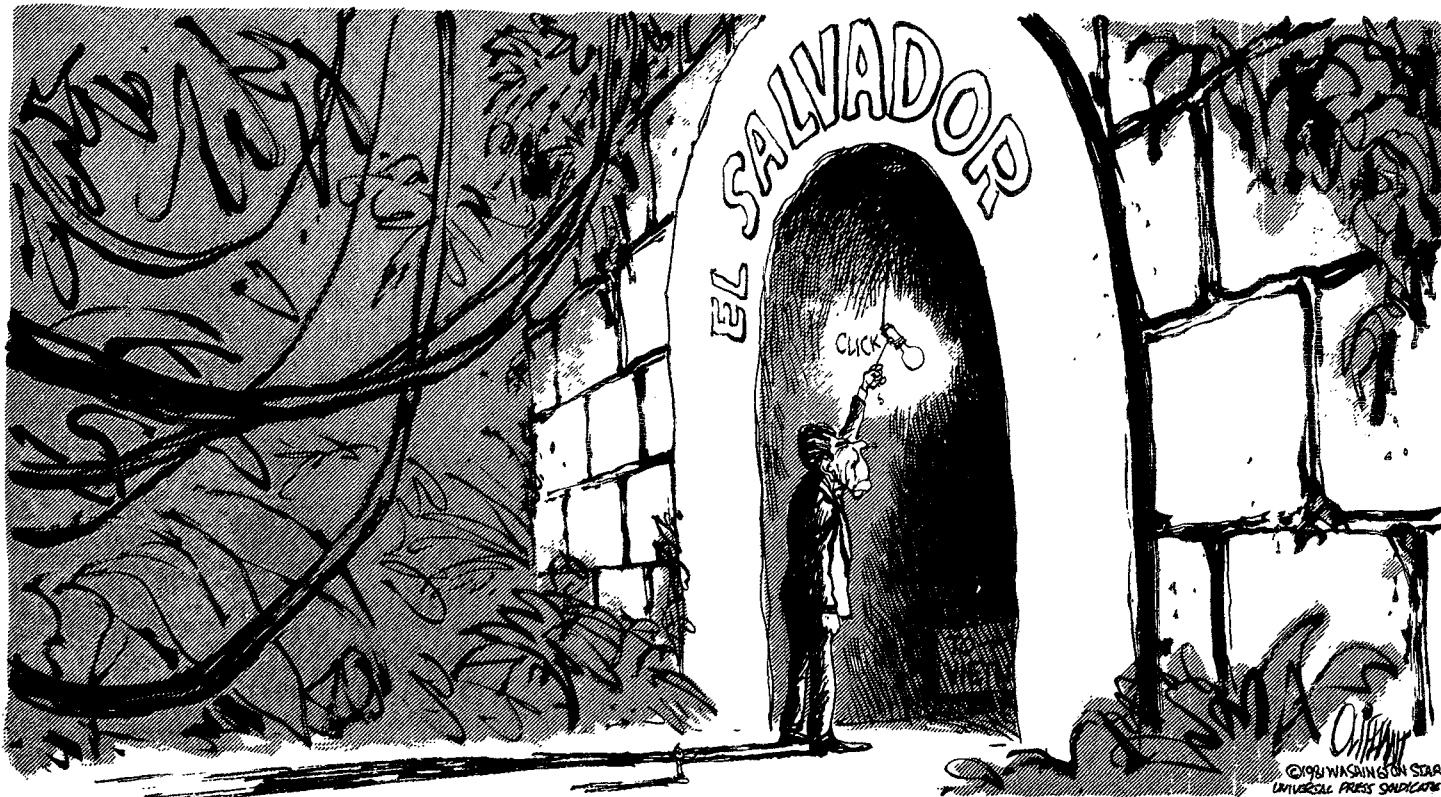
A gun-wielding Gen. Tejero directs the takeover of the House chamber.

tions" flex their muscles. The ultra-conservative Catholic hierarchy is charging onto the political battlefield to combat divorce and abortion, stirring up a moralistic backlash facilitated by the fact that a porno boom has been the most visible feature of a "sexual liberation" more apparent than real. Pro-torture officers have shown their solidarity by resigning in protest over the disciplining of those responsible for torturing Arregui to death.

For the Spanish bourgeoisie, a compelling motivation for democratization was to attach Spain economically to democratic Europe. But France's role in particular in stalling Spain's entry into the Common Market has aroused considerable bitterness against both the French government and the French Communist Party, which have put the interests of French wine growers ahead of consolidating democracy in Spain. Democracy has turned out to be a weaker card in the international game than advertised.

Meanwhile, the advent of Haig and democratic NATO's tolerance for the military coup in Turkey seem to create a situation in which Spain's entry into NATO would not be blocked and could even be hastened by a military coup.

The image of the duly elected Congress as hostage of the military thus remains as a symbol of a relationship of forces on the eve of the confirmation of a new prime minister who promises to turn Spain sharply to the right. Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo means to end the transitional "consensus" policy of Adolfo Suarez, involving consultations with the Socialist and Communist opposition leaders. Instead, Calvo Sotelo promises economic liberalism *a la* Thatcher-Friedman, anti-communism and a strongly pro-NATO foreign policy. Sotelo has said his government would mark an end to the "transition period." A big question is whether the new period will arouse the population from its "disenchantment" with democratic politics. Until that happens, the left is in the odd position of looking for protection to the throne.



THE LIGHT AT THIS END OF THE TUNNEL