

SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/05/24 : CIA-RDP80T00634A000400010006-6

5 - ONLY
5

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
National Foreign Assessment Center
31 August 1978

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SPAIN: Que Se Vayan! (Security Aspects of the Basque Problem)

Key Judgments

In the wake of renewed violence last month in Spain's troubled Basque region, the Madrid government appears to be toying with the idea of allowing a native Basque police force to assume responsibility for public order. This would remove a major irritant from the Basque scene, but there are serious obstacles:

- *Neither Madrid nor the Spanish military would accept the replacement of national police by a Basque force; at best the Basque units would supplement existing security forces and take over some of their more confrontational chores.*
- *Basques have a strong antipathy to uniforms and would be loath to join even a regional police force.*
- *The Madrid government is concerned that the only people who would join are terrorist and other extremist infiltrators.*
- *It would probably be a year or so before the Basque force could become effective.*

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis. Questions and comments may be addressed to

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

RP M 78-10335

Approved For Release 2006/05/24 : CIA-RDP80T00634A000400010006-6

SECRET

[Redacted]

The government's position is complicated by the military, which is leery of Basque efforts to break away from Madrid's control. So far the military has not been directly involved in the Basque troubles, but there are recent signs that Basque terrorists have decided to provoke the armed forces. The military is not likely to intervene unless the situation deteriorates dramatically, but the generals may press King Juan Carlos to crack down on "law and order," or even encourage him to change the government.

Even if Basque police units come into being, it is difficult to be sanguine about prospects for controlling terrorism in the region. Terrorists will continue to ply their trade until the Basque population can be persuaded to take a strong stand against them. The underlying concern of the Suarez government is that continued violence and military pressure will combine to undermine the consensus politics on which the structure of Spanish democracy rests.

The renewed wave of violence last month in the troubled Basque region of Spain highlighted the long-standing hostility between Basques and the national police, while reminding the government that it has not yet established firm control over its own security forces. Madrid appears to be toying with the idea of allowing a native Basque police force to assume responsibility for public order. This would remove a major irritant from the Basque situation, but there are serious obstacles to such a move, and in any case it would take time.

25X1

2 The violence last month, which left two Basque demonstrators dead and many injured, was triggered by the savage overreaction of Armed Police units in Pamplona to provocations by Basque radicals. It culminated in the sacking of Renteria, a San Sebastian suburb, by riot control troops of the Armed Police--an act that Interior Minister Martin Villa termed "totally incomprehensible." The government moved quickly to limit the damage, dismissing the civil governor of Navarra and the two commanders of police units alleged to have killed the two demonstrators; the officers and men of the Armed Police who rampaged through Renteria were arrested and are likely to be court-martialed. More recently, a new police chief has been appointed in Bilbao.

"When a policeman dies, everyone celebrates"

The hatred between Basques and the two components of the national police--the paramilitary Civil Guard and the Armed Police--is deep-seated.

Approved For Release 2006/05/24 : CIA-RDP80T00634A000400010006-6

1 Two of the three Basque provinces, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa, fought against Franco during the Civil War and he never forgave them. The Basques were persecuted economically and culturally, and Franco harshly repressed all signs of Basque nationalism. The security forces--who, as a matter of policy, were recruited outside the Basque provinces--became the instruments of that repression.

1,2 The national police have traditionally been the major target of the Basque terrorist organization ETA. When Basques are killed by the police, demonstrators chant "ETA, vengalos," (revenge them). As the leader of the Basque Revolutionary Party (EIA)--the only party from the Basque abertzale ("patriotic" left) represented in the lower house of the Spanish parliament--commented recently, "In the Basque country, when a policeman dies, everyone celebrates."*

1 In Euskadi--as the Basques call their region--the national police are considered an army of occupation.

3
1
1,2 Even the 20 percent pay differential for serving in the Basque provinces is not enough compensation for the Civil Guard and Armed Police, who feel like sitting ducks for ETA snipers and whose children are harried and beaten up at school. On 1 August a spokesman for the National Professional Association of Police said that the majority of the Armed Police stationed in the Basque region wanted to leave because of the "intolerable" circumstances and living conditions--an admission that will encourage the ETA.

Que Se Vayan!

1,2 Understandably, policemen under this kind of pressure will overreact under provocation, and it is easy to say that there will be no lasting solution to the "Basque Problem"--or even peace in which to work out a solution--until the last Civil Guard and Armed Policeman has left Euskadi. Que se Vayan!--roughly "(National Police) Go Home!"--read the posters that have recently covered the walls of Basque cities, and the cry has even been taken up in parliament, the Cortes, by the lone EIA deputy. It is less

1 **This is probably less true now than it was a year or so ago, when the ETA concentrated on killing policemen who had a record of brutality against Basques under Franco. Most of these officers have now been transferred to less sensitive regions, and the ETA is reduced to killing at random. More and more innocent Basque bystanders are getting hurt.*

1, 2 easy to work out a plan for their withdrawal that is both realistic and acceptable to Madrid and the Spanish military. Even the EIA and other abertzale parties concede that the withdrawal will have to be gradual, and that local police forces will have to be recruited and trained to fill the vacuum. This process could take a year or more and is unlikely to be initiated until after the constitutional division of powers between Madrid and the autonomous Basque government has been accepted by all sides.

1, 2 No one in a position of responsibility is seriously considering a withdrawal of all of the national security forces soon. Rather, the idea is to push them more into the background, letting local police handle some of the more highly visible work involving confrontations, like controlling crowds and fighting street crime. According to information received by the Spanish newsmagazine Cambio 16, Martin Villa is thinking of establishing a force of about 400 men in each Basque province to supplement the 5,000 members of the national police already there. He has acknowledged that these local police forces would derive from the historical tradition of the pre-Civil War provincial police: The Miqueletes in Guipuzcoa, the Minones in Alava, and the Forales in Vizcaya.

2 According to Cambio 16 there is general agreement between Martin Villa and his counterpart on the Basque General Council, Socialist Txiqui Benegas, that the officers of these local police forces must be "professionals"--that is, trained in military academies. They would be chosen by the autonomous regional government of Euskadi from lists supplied by Madrid.

2 Filling the ranks presents a more difficult problem. Basques have developed a strong distaste for national uniforms particularly those of the security forces, even those Basque politicians who are the staunchest advocates of a regional police force are concerned that not enough young Basques can be persuaded to join. The other side of that coin is the fear, especially in Madrid, that the only people to join would be members of the ETA and other extremist infiltrators.

1, 2
4 One alternative would be to expand the role and powers of the existing but largely ineffective municipal police. The municipal police, too, tend to be maquetos (born outside of Euskadi), but at least they do not wear the hated uniforms of the Civil Guard and the Armed Police. During the recent violence in Pamplona, for example, municipal policemen moved with impunity through hostile demonstrators intent on provoking clashes with the Armed Police.

1,2 Some Basque politicians argue that the important thing is not so much that the police be Basques as that they be under the control of the Basque autonomous government. It is, however, highly unlikely that the Basque government will be allowed to exercise full control over the police forces. Martin Villa pointed out in a press conference that local police would still come under national control and would be headed by "officials or chiefs of the Armed Forces, the Civil Guard, or the Armed Police." The new draft constitution in fact stipulates that the national state has exclusive authority over public security, though within that limitation the door is left open for the creation of regional police forces by the autonomous regions (Article 143.27).

1,2 For the government, the problem is complicated by the knowledge that other regions will soon clamor for the same right to an autonomous police force. Madrid, therefore, tends to emphasize a general, watered-down formula that would be widely applicable. Basques, however, argue that theirs is a special case that requires a tailor-made solution.

"Terrorists have chosen us for victims...it is an honor."

1,2,5 In any case the military--ever sensitive to Basque efforts to break away from Madrid's control--would not stand for a completely autonomous regional police force. Until recently, the military as such has not been directly involved in the Basque Problem.* There are signs, however, that the ETA has decided that its best--and perhaps last--hope of spoiling whatever constitutional deal Prime Minister Suarez and the moderate Basque Nationalist Party may be considering lies in provoking the sleeping military giant.

- 2,5
- On 18 June an ETA commando group forced its way into the headquarters of the military governor of Guipuzcoa, possibly intending to kidnap the governor.
 - On 11 July, following the violence in Pamplona, Basque extremists dynamited the railway line between San Sebastian and France--an important line of military communication.
 - On 21 July terrorists (ETA or, perhaps, the leftist group GRAPO acting in conjunction with ETA) killed a general and his aide in Madrid--the first purely military assassination in recent years.

**Most senior officers of the Armed Police are on detached duty from the Army; at least one Army officer acting in this capacity has been killed by the ETA.*

1, 2 -- On 28 August terrorists killed four policemen in three different regions of northern Spain, including two in Euskadi. The attacks were clearly aimed at demonstrating widespread terrorist cooperation there, and provoking the police or the military into an overreaction.

1, 2 The ETA apparently hopes to get the military to press for a government crackdown on public order in the Basque provinces or, better still, to order a military occupation of Euskadi. In its "program book" of 1964, the ETA spelled out the reasoning behind this goal. If deteriorating public order results in a military takeover, the terrorists will step up their guerrilla activity:

2 The enemy, like a colossus who is stung by many bees, loses control of himself, becomes infuriated to the point of paroxysm, and hits out blindly to the right and left. We have then achieved one of our major goals: To oblige our adversary to commit 1,000 stupid moves and acts of barbarism. The majority of his victims are innocent people. Thus, the people, up to then more or less passive and waiting to see what happens, become outraged against the colonialist tyrant and, by way of reaction, move completely to our side.

The military is girding for more attacks. After the assassination of the two officers in Madrid, Defense Minister Gutierrez Mellado issued a terse communique:

1, 2, 5 Terrorists have chosen us for victims. It is an honor. Possibly others in our ranks will fall. But above us all there is Spain, which will not break apart because of that.

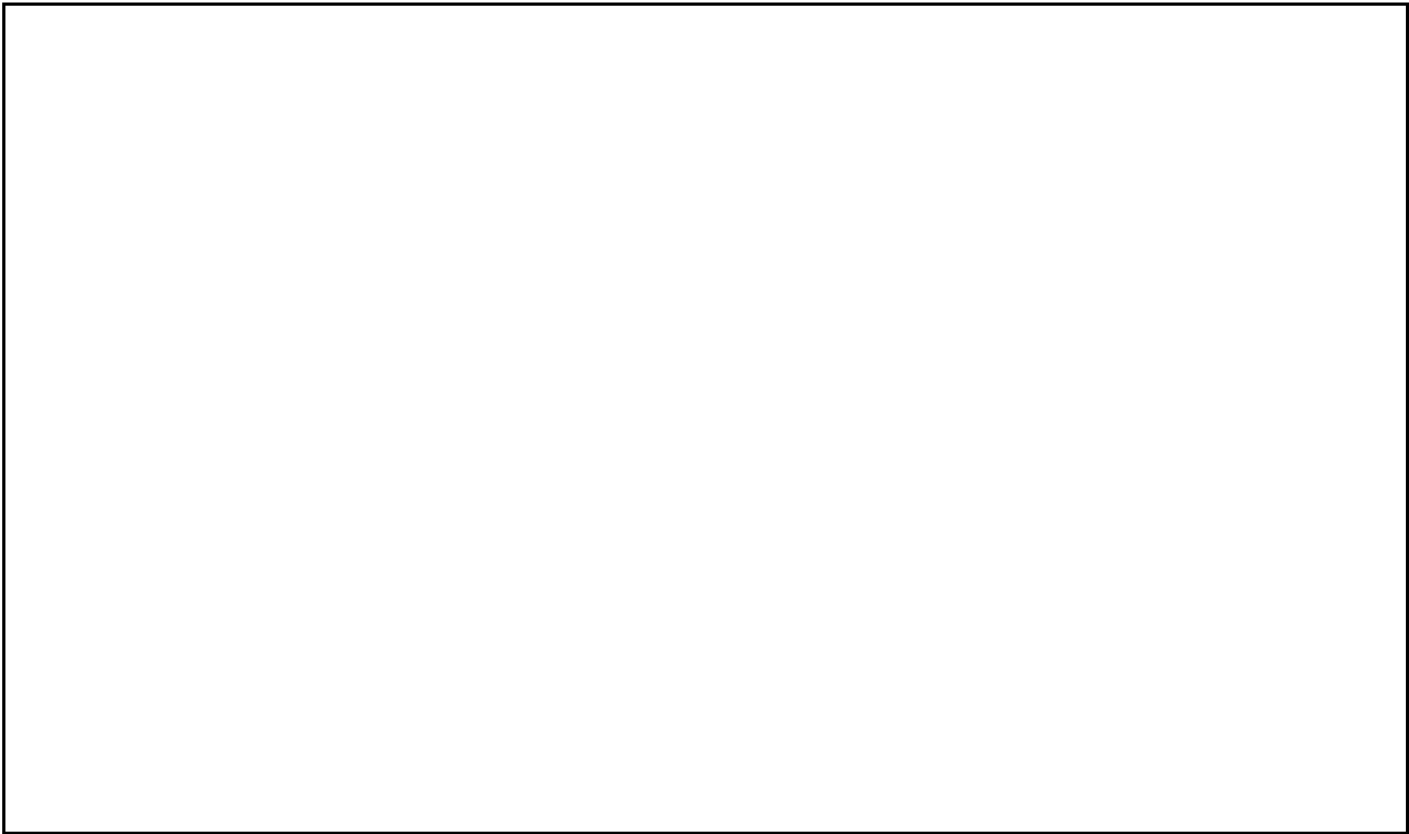
25X1 Both government and military seem to realize that military intervention in Euskadi would play into the ETA's hands. As an admission of the government's failure to control the situation, such intervention would have far-reaching political implications. Moreover, the military is neither trained nor equipped to perform a public order role and it does not appear to relish the prospect.

If you can't trust the police, whom can you trust?

2

The government has taken steps to set up an anti-terrorist force called the Special Operations Group that will be part of the Armed Police. It will be patterned after similar antiterrorist units in Western Europe.

25X1



Outlook

1.5

It is difficult to be sanguine about a question that is as complex and deep-rooted as the Basque problem, especially where good will is so conspicuously lacking. On the positive side, however, the government has the backing of the Socialists and Communists in its efforts to stymie the terrorists.** The establishment of a local police force offers a

25X1



1 glimmer of hope--not for a lasting solution of the whole political, cultural, and economic problem, but for a respite from the continual bloody clashes between demonstrators and police that have initiated so many of the cycles of violence in the region. This, in turn, could provide the opportunity for cooler heads on both sides to prevail.

1 A regional police force will not appease the ETA any more than past amnesties and concessions on political autonomy have. The hard-core terrorists will settle for nothing less than an independent Marxist Euskadi; even an autonomous region governed by the moderate Basque Nationalists--who represent the vast majority of ethnic Basques--would be inimical to the ETA goal. For Basques, therefore, the stark choice is becoming increasingly evident as the government nears a modus vivendi with the Basque Nationalists: they must be either with the ETA or against it.

2 1 Among Basques who responded to a poll published this summer in Cambio 16, the support for ETA's armed struggle was only 4 to 8 percent in the three Basque provinces, but 8 to 15 percent still expressed a general support for the ETA.* Although 32 to 39 percent opposed the ETA, 33 to 37 percent were neither for nor against. The government will have little chance of stamping out ETA as long as such a large portion of the population remains apathetic.

25X1

*The poll was taken last October.

Approved For Release 2006/05/24 : CIA-RDP80T00634A000400010006-6

25X1

Approved For Release 2006/05/24 : CIA-RDP80T00634A000400010006-6