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August 11th, 1953

SPAIN AND THE WEST

Dear Sir,

Mussolini and Primo de Rivera, dictators of Italy and Spain, signed in 1926 a secret treaty of friendship which had as its object the establishment of a common policy directed to oust Great Britain from the Mediterranean.

When the republican regime was instituted in Spain, Mussolini suggested to señor Gabriel Alomar, Spanish Republican Ambassador in Rome, that the Spanish Republic should ratify that Treaty of common mediterranean policy, and pointed out at the same time that the political regimes in both countries - Fascist Monarchy in Italy and Democratic Republic in Spain - would be mutually respected. The Spanish Republican Foreign Minister, professor Fernando de los Ríos, well known for his pro-British sympathies, to whom the Spanish Ambassador in Rome asked for instructions, suggested that the Ambassador should prolong the discussions with Mussolini and obtain further information from the Italian dictator, without giving him any definite reply. Mussolini did not fail to understand adequately such attitude as one of opposition on the part of the Spanish Republic to ratify the antibritish pact of 1926, and he therefore approached the Spanish Monarchists, enemies of the Spanish Republic, to conspire against the Republican regime.

The first meeting of Mussolini and Marshall Balbo, with the Monarchists conspirators took place in Rome on the 31st. March, 1934. Those present from the Spanish side were St. General Emilio Barrera, señor Antonio Golcochea, Monarchist M.P. belonging to the "Renovación Española" Party, and señor Rafael Olazabel and señor Antonio Lizarza, representing the "Comunión Tradicionalista" or Carlist Party. Spanish Phalange did not take part in the negotiations.

Mussolini provided the Monarchist conspirators with the first funds and the first arms to organize the rising which took place in July 1936 and which brought General Franco into power. The text of the Rome meeting was first published in English in June 1938 as appendix to the book "Searchlight on Spain" by the Duchess of Atholl. The date of 1936 was already established in the secret treaty of 1926, which provided for a validity of ten years. At the 1926 talks the Mediterranean was to be divided placing the Central and Eastern areas under Italian influence and the Western part under Spanish influence.

The present hardening of the antibritish feeling of Franco and the Spanish Press is mainly determined by the attitude of Neguib in Egypt. Suez and Gibraltar are the two gates of the Mediterranean.

Mussolini having disappeared from the international scene and having Italy entered the club of the western democratic nations, Franco wishes to inherit the mussolinian policy of the Mare Nostrum, directed at ousting Great Britain from the Mediterranean. In order to establish the foundations for such policy, señor Martin Artajo, Spanish Foreign Minister, accompanied by the daughter and son-in-law of General Franco, visited recently the Arab countries. The Spanish diplomatic missions in the Arab Countries of the Near East, are showing great activity in the way of founding centres for the furthering of Hispano-Arab friendship, publishing bulletins and developing their contacts in a higher degree than, for example, the Spanish Embassy in London, despite the fact that in those countries there are no Spanish subjects and no economic, political or international Spanish interests are at issue there. The overthrow of King Farouk and the assassination of King Abdulla of Jordan which took place soon after this latter King had visited Spain, were adverse events for the policy of Franco's Spain, and have made it necessary to delay antibritish activities until normal and good relations are established with the new rulers of the two Arab countries, particularly with Egypt.

Once this aim is achieved, General Franco has a free hand to re-start that campaign, with a mind to collect in Gibraltar the British defeat in Suez, which the Spanish dictator is taking for granted.

General Neguib and General Franco are counting on American indiscriminate sympathy for all anticolonialist activities, and the Spanish dictator believes also that once the Americans are established in the Peninsular bases by virtue of the bilateral treaty whose signature is being held as imminent for the last twelve months, Great Britain would, in order to retain Gibraltar, be unable to put forward the excuse of the defence of the Western Mediterranean and Eastern Atlantic, which would be assisted more efficiently from the naval and air bases established in the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco by the U.S. of America.

I feel that the above details may perhaps merit some attention from those who have recently been dealing with this matter in your paper.

Yours sincerely

Manuel de Irujo