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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20530

October 30, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WILLIAM P. CLARK
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: U.S. Comments on Spanish Political Situation

The Socialist victory in Spain brings the Spanish left to power for the first time since the collapse of the Second Republic and the outbreak of a bloody civil war in 1936. Many Spaniards still associate the Socialists with the divisions which led to civil war and are fearful that Socialist programs could polarize the country again.

Tension will be high during the transition and its aftermath. The extreme right already has threatened to destroy Spanish democracy and a minority in the armed forces are known to harbor anti-democratic feelings. Moreover, as a result of the collapse of the political center the new parliament will be polarized. The major opposition party, the rightist Alianza Popular (AP) has already made it clear that its opposition will be strong across the board.

The Socialists have campaigned on a moderate platform and we expect them to be very cautious in implementing new policies. Although their initial post-election statements have been muted, elements in the Socialist Party may make statements about NATO or U.S. Spanish security cooperation which will tempt us to respond in kind.

We intend to be scrupulous to avoid publicly engaging the new leadership on these issues until the government is invested (2-6 weeks after the election) and policy is developed. Our general approach will be characterized by patience and restraint, emphasizing continuity and shared interests, and, above all, restricted public comment. We hope all administration spokesmen avoid potentially provocative comments during the transition period.

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JUN 15 2018

L. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

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