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Viewing cable 06MADRID1490, AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the structure of a cable as well as how to discuss them with others. See also the FAQs

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables (browse by origin to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this WikiSource article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags #cablegate and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. #06MADRID1490.

Table with 5 columns: Reference ID, Created, Released, Classification, Origin. Row 1: 06MADRID1490, 2006-06-09 16:04, 2010-12-02 12:12, CONFIDENTIAL, Embassy Madrid

VZCZCXRO4064
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHMD #1490/01 1601646
ZNY CCCC ZZH
P 091646Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9958
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0234
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 4952
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0422
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 0272
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0936
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0314
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 1185
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0438
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 1916
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0121
RUEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 001490
SIPDIS
SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2016
TAGS: PREL PGOV SP
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT
MADRID 00001490 001.2 OF 003
Classified By: DCM Bob Manzanares; reason 1.4 (B) and (D).
¶1. (C) Summary. The Ambassador met with Vice President Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega on June 8 to review bilateral relations and to discuss regional issues of joint interest, including developments in Peru, Bolivia, Iran, Syria, and North Africa. Regarding the CIA flights issue, Vice President de la Vega said Spain's inclusion in the Council of Europe report had caught the Zapatero Government totally off guard and she insisted Spain had nothing to hide on the issue. She said the Spanish Government felt comfortable that it could contend with domestic concerns regarding CIA flights through Spain, asking only that the USG provide Spain any relevant information to avoid any surprises. De la Vega made a strong pitch for increased USG-Spanish collaboration on North Africa (NOTE: FM Moratinos will likely raise this during his June 19 meeting with the Secretary. END NOTE). On Iran, de la Vega agreed with the need to maintain a unified international voice on Iran's nuclear program, saying Javier Solana was the appropriate interlocutor with Tehran. She welcomed Alan Garcia's victory in Peru, but lamented that in Bolivia Evo Morales appeared to be under the direction of the most negative leftist elements in his administration. End Summary.
//BILATERAL RELATIONS IMPROVING//
¶2. (C) Vice President de la Vega said she was aware of FM Miguel Angel Moratinos' upcoming meeting with the Secretary,

as well as MOD Alonso's June 8 meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld on the margins of the NATO ministerial. She expressed satisfaction with the improvements in the bilateral relationship over the last year. The Ambassador agreed that we had made progress, adding that there was much more that our countries could do together. The Ambassador congratulated the Zapatero Government for its handling of the thorny Catalan autonomy issue. De la Vega said that the Zapatero administration was convinced that the Catalan issue was nearing a successful conclusion and predicted that the June 18 referendum in the Catalan Region would go smoothly and result in public acceptance of a renegotiated autonomy statute. The Ambassador reviewed his plans to visit the Basque Region June 22-23, a visit focused on business issues, but also including a courtesy call on Basque Regional Government leader Juan Jose Ibarretxe. Vice President de la Vega expressed no concern regarding such a visit.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador informed de la Vega of the June 28-29 visit of Education Secretary Spellings, noting Secretary Spellings' strong background on foreign affairs and lengthy government career. He said that while he would not normally suggest Vice President de la Vega meet visiting cabinet officials, it could be worthwhile to arrange a brief meeting. De la Vega said she would welcome such a meeting if her schedule permitted.

//CIA FLIGHTS//

¶4. (C) The Ambassador said that FM Moratinos had recently advised him that Spain's National Court had accepted a case filed by a private individual alleging USG wrongdoing in Spain during the transit of Spanish airports by CIA aircraft. Moratinos indicated the Spanish Government's desire to give this issue as low a profile as possible, though, as a judicial case, the government had a limited capacity to influence the direction of the case. De la Vega said she was aware of FM Moratinos' communication on this issue and expressed confidence that the Zapatero Government could manage it with little difficulty. (NOTE: According to June 9 press reports, government prosecutors have expressed opposition to the National Court's hearing of a case in which there is no evidence of a crime having been committed. END NOTE).

¶5. (C) By contrast, she said, the Zapatero Government had been surprised by the Council of Europe report alleging that Spain "permitted or failed to investigate" the use of Mallorca as a staging point for the "illegal" transfer of individuals by the CIA. (NOTE: An MFA spokesperson roundly denied any involvement by Spain in the illegal transfer of

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suspected terrorists. END NOTE). De la Vega said Spain was prepared to deal with this issue, but wanted to be certain that it had all the information available regarding the flights to avoid being caught unprepared. The Ambassador noted that we too had an interest in preserving our credibility and were careful to share whatever information we had and to avoid any actions that might create problems for the Spanish authorities. De la Vega emphasized that Spain had no objection to USG intelligence flights through Spanish territory; they simply wanted to be kept informed and, if necessary, to be able to demonstrate that they were exercising proper oversight of foreign aircraft passing through Spain.

//IRAN, SYRIA//

¶6. (C) The Ambassador recounted his last meeting with President Zapatero, during which Zapatero identified Iran as the greatest threat to peace in the Broader Middle East. The Ambassador said this was precisely the view of the USG and that this underscored the importance of the USG's historic decision to directly join the multilateral discussions with Iran. He said it was vital at this critical phase that Iran see a united international front, determined to prevent its production of nuclear weapons. Vice President de la Vega emphatically agreed, saying Javier Solana was the appropriate interlocutor to deliver a unified message to Iran. The Ambassador conveyed a similar message on the need to maintain the consensus limiting high level contacts with Syria in order to prevent Damascus from driving a wedge between allies. Vice President de la Vega agreed on this point as well.

//PERU, BOLIVIA, ARGENTINA//

¶7. (C) Vice President de la Vega expressed satisfaction with the "good news" of Alan Garcia's victory in Peru, but lamented that Bolivian President Evo Morales seemed to be under the sway of his extreme left Vice President. Without naming Venezuelan President Chavez, de la Vega indicated Spain's conviction that other "negative influences" were also at work in Bolivia. The Ambassador said that Chavez was certainly eager to exert influence, but that Castro was likely just as involved, though with more subtlety than Chavez. De la Vega said that one positive development

resulting from Chavez' meddling was realization by Brazilian President Lula da Silva that Chavez represented a genuine threat to Brazilian interests in the region, just as Peruvian President-elect Garcia, and to a lesser extent Chilean President Bachelet, understood the nature of the threat.

¶8. (C) The Ambassador asked for Spain's view on whether Argentine President Kirchner was likewise growing wary of Chavez. De la Vega said that Kirchner was a special case, in that he felt a strong affinity towards both President Zapatero and Vice President de la Vega. She said she believed Spain could influence his actions in a positive direction and noted that he would be making a state visit to Spain in the near future.

//NORTH AFRICA//

¶9. (C) Turning to her previous meeting with the Ambassador, de la Vega recalled having urged the USG to increase collaboration with Spain in promoting stability in North Africa. She asked whether the Ambassador saw any chance of progress on this issue. The Ambassador said that the USG was actively considering various approaches on North Africa, in light of the stalemate on Western Sahara and other sources of tension. He suggested the Spanish Government present the USG and other interested parties a detailed explanation of how it intends to move forward on North Africa and recommend what others could do to promote such an initiative. (NOTE: Our sense is that FM Moratinos may raise this issue in his June 19 meeting with the Secretary. END NOTE).

//COMMENT//

¶10. (C) As with the Ambassador's last meeting with Vice President de la Vega in April, the atmosphere was relaxed and

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cordial throughout. The key message being relayed by the Spanish Government through the nature and frequency of these meetings is that they want to put bilateral relations on an even keel. They do not use these encounters to press for a meeting between Presidents Bush and Zapatero, an objective they appear to have abandoned for the moment. Instead, the Zapatero Government seems content to use the Vice President's channel with the Ambassador to transmit where they see opportunities for cooperation (Africa, Latin America) and to assess the USG's view of the overall state of the bilateral relationship.

AGUIRRE