

By PETER UEBERSAX

Madrid, Spain — (UPI) — The late Generalissimo Francisco Franco believed the Central Intelligence Agency was trying to bring down his regime, according to the memoirs of one of his closest confidants.

Titled "My Private Conversations with Franco," the book — written by Lt. Gen. Francisco Franco Salgado, a first cousin who served the dictator as military aide and personal secretary for almost 40 years — appears to be the first genuine account of what went on in Franco's tightly guarded palace residence.

Franco Salgado died last year, a few weeks before Franco.

"I believe that all activities in the Western world directed against us have been carried out by groups subsidized by the CIA," Franco Salgado quotes the dictator as saying.

"The goal is to implant in Spain an American-style democracy on the day I disappear . . . but they are mistaken . . . (the alleged CIA activities) only help disorder and subversion, and Russia is the only one to profit."

But Franco was convinced that whoever tried to change his regime would not succeed — either in his lifetime or after his death. He believed 90 percent of the Spanish people backed him, and he repeatedly expressed confidence that Juan Carlos would continue the authoritarian system once he became king.

Moreover, Franco said, "I am certain that the army will always defend the regime. It can, of course, be improved . . . but will always retain its essential features. To try to bring liberal democracy to Spain would mean to open the way to a republic — politically conservative at first, but later Communist."

Franco emerges from the book's 560 pages as a man wavering between prudence and toughness. Throughout the 16 years covered by the book — 1954 to 1970 — Franco appears to be obsessed with the question of succession.

No other person is mentioned in his conversations as frequently as Don Juan de Borbon, Count of Barcelona and legal heir to the throne. Franco discarded him in favor of his son, Juan Carlos, because the elder Borbon was too liberal, but never seemed to feel certain the decision would not backfire.

The secret of his 39-year rule lay in his knowing how to play his followers off against each other, according to the book.

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Franco Smelled CIA Plot

Claimed Agency
Tried to Do Him In