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KNOTTY PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BY SPANISH AND CUBAN LEADERS
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, NOV 12, REUTER -- PREMIER FILIPE GONZALEZ OF SPAIN, WHO ARRIVES HERE THURSDAY EVENING ON THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF HAVANA BY SPANISH SETTLERS, WILL FIND IMPORTANT AREAS OF RELATIVE AGREEMENT WITH HIS HOST, CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO, AND OTHER AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT, WHICH WILL COME AS NO SURPRISE TO HIM, ACCORDING TO SOME WESTERN DIPLOMATS HERE.

THE SPANISH PREMIER HAS VISITED THREE NATIONS IN NINE DAYS DURING HIS PRESENT LATIN AMERICAN TOUR, EACH MORE POLITICALLY LEFT THAN THE OTHER. GONZALEZ VISITED ECUADOR WITH ITS CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESIDENT LEON FEBRES CORDERO, PERU WITH ITS YOUNG PRESIDENT, ALAN GARCIA, WHO, LIKE GONZALEZ, IS A PARTISAN OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND NOW CUBA, WITH ITS MARXIST-LENINIST SOCIALIST REGIME WHICH IS AN ALLY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

AMONG THE MAJOR THEMES THAT ARE LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED WHEN CASTRO AND GONZALEZ MEET TOGETHER SECRETLY, ACCORDING TO THE WESTERN DIPLOMATS, ARE THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFLICT, THE CONTROVERSIAL DECISION OF BRITAIN TO DECLARE A FISHING ZONE AROUND THE MALVINAS (FALKLAND ISLANDS), WORLD PEACE AND DISARMAMENT, CUBAN COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED SPANISH PROPERTIES, BILATERAL TRADE, THE FOREIGN DEBT AND THE RELEASE OF A POLITICAL PRISONER WHO HAS BECOME A CAUSE CELEBRE IN SPAIN ELOY GUTIERREZ, MENOYO.

THE TWO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO CUBAN OFFICIALS, WILL REITERATE THEIR KNOWN POSITIONS IN FAVOR OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA ALONG THE LINES PROPOSED BY THE CONTADORA GROUP MADE UP OF MEXICO, PANAMA, VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA. THE SOURCES SAID THAT THIS REAFFIRMATION OF THE ROLE OF CONTADORA WILL BE INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT INASMUCH AS BOTH COSTA RICA AND HONDURAS HAVE THREATENED TO BOYCOTT THE WORK OF THE GROUP AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN FUNNELLING THE 100 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID TO THE NICARAGUAN CONTRAS WHICH HAS APPROVED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS.

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WESTERN DIPLOMATS BELIEVE THAT THE DIFFERENCES THAT PRESIDENT GONZALEZ HAS WITH THE SANDANISTA REGIME WILL BE LIMITED TO HIS REITERATION OF HIS BELIEF THAT A PLURALIST AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT SHOULD PREVAIL IN NICARAGUA.

THE SPANISH PREMIER AND CUBAN PRESIDENT WILL FIND NO DIFFICULTY IN AGREEING ON THEIR STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE UNILATERAL BRITISH ANNOUNCEMENT OF A TWO HUNDRED MILES FISHING ZONE AROUND THE MALVINAS (FALKLAND ISLANDS). BOTH GOVERNMENTS BACKED THE ARGENTINIAN POSITION DURING THE TEN DAY WAR IN 1982. CUBAN OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT PRESIDENT CASTRO WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR SPAIN'S REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE THE FISHING ZONE AND ITS ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO CONTINUE FISHING IN THE AREA WITHOUT ASKING AUTHORIZATION FROM THE BRITISH.

ACCORDING TO SOME WESTERN DIPLOMATS BOTH MEN WILL FIND COMMON GROUND, IN GENERAL TERMS, AROUND THE QUESTION OF PEACE AND DISARMAMENT BUT INASMUCH AS SPAIN IS A MEMBER OF NATO AND CUBA SUPPORTS SOVIET LEADER GORBACHOV'S PROPOSALS WHOLE-HEARTEDLY, THERE WILL BE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN DEFINING SPECIFIC POLICIES. FOR INSTANCE, THEY SAY, IT CANNOT BE EXPECTED THAT GONZALEZ WILL OPPOSE PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE, AT LEAST PUBLICLY. CASTRO WILL ALSO BE AWARE, THE SOURCES SAY, OF THE EXPOSURES MADE IN SEDAN AND CONFIRMED BY SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ ORDOÑEZ, ACCORDING TO THE ECONOMIST, THAT SPAIN IS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO COOPERATE WITH NATO'S MILITARY FORCES.

DURING PRESIDENT GONZALEZ THREE DAYS IN CUBA, HE WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF CUBAN COMPENSATION FOR THE SPANISH PROPERTIES NATIONALIZED BY THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT IN 1960. WESTERN DIPLOMATS BELIEVE THAT BOTH SIDES WILL SHOW THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE THAT HAS NOW GONE INTO ITS TWENTY SIXTH YEAR BUT THAT THERE IS SLIGHT CHANCE THAT A SOLUTION WILL BE REACHED. CUBA IS OFFERING THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE PROPERTIES BASED ON THEIR DECLARED TAX VALUE AND SPAIN HAS BEEN ASKING FOR AT LEAST BETWEEN 100 AND 200 MILLION DOLLARS.

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ANOTHER THEME THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED BY GONZALEZ AND HIS DELEGATION WITH THE CUBANS IS FOREIGN TRADE. CUBA, LIKE PERU AND ECUADOR HAS A NEGATIVE COMMERCIAL TRADE BALANCE WITH SPAIN. CUBAN OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE TO CORRECT THE ~~DIS~~ PROPORTION THROUGH GREATER SPANISH PURCHASES OF CUBAN GOODS AND SERVICES. HOWEVER, A SPANISH COMMERCIAL OFFICIAL SAID THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT TRADE CAN INCREASE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

LAST YEAR SPAIN IMPORTED APPROXIMATELY 120 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF CUBAN GOODS WHILE IT EXPORTED MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS WORTH TO CUBA. HISTORICALLY, SPAIN WAS A MAJOR CLIENT OF CUBAN CRUDE SUGAR, THE ISLANDS MAIN EXPORT PRODUCT, BUT SINCE 1979 ITS PURCHASES HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO ZERO BECAUSE OF WESTERN EUROPE'S DRAMATIC RISE AS A SUGAR PRODUCER.

THE BURDENSOME FOREIGN DEBT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS AND THE 377 MILLION DOLLARS WHICH CUBA OWES SPAIN WILL ALSO BE A TOPIC OF CONVERSATION, ACCORDING TO BOTH CUBAN AND WESTERN SOURCES HERE. CASTRO HAS SPOKEN OFTEN ABOUT THE URGENT NEED FOR THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS TO CANCEL THE DEBTS OF UNDER-DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS SINCE, HE ARGUES, THEY ARE MILLSTONES AROUND THE NECKS OF THIRD WORLD NATIONS. THE SPANISH PREMIER, WHILE NEVER ADVOCATING CANCELLATION, HAS ASKED FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF CREDITOR NATIONS.

GONZALEZ' VIEWS ON THE THIRD WORLD'S FOREIGN DEBT HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY CUBANS OFFICIALS, WESTERN DIPLOMATS COMMENTED, SINCE CUBA HAS JUST REITERATED ITS REQUEST FOR THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN FRESH LOAN MONEY IN ORDER TO PAY ITS 1986 MATURITIES FROM WESTERN COMMERCIAL BANKS. REPRESENTATIVES OF CREDITOR BANKS

MEET IN PARIS ON NOVEMBER 18 AND 19 TO DISCUSS THE CUBAN REQUEST.

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THE MOST CONFLICTIVE POINT THAT WILL ARISE BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS, ACCORDING TO BOTH CUBAN AND WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE, IS THAT CONCERNING THE RELEASE FROM A CUBAN JAIL OF ELOY GUTIERREZ MENOYO, THE FORMER LEADER OF A GUERRILLA GROUP THAT FOUGHT TO OVERTHROW THE DICTATOR FULGENCIO BATISTA PRIOR TO 1959.

THE CASE OF GUTIERREZ MENOYO HAS BECOME A +CAUSE CELEBRE+ IN SPAIN AND FILIPE GONZALEZ WILL ASK FIDEL CASTRO FOR HIS RELEASE, ACCORDING TO SPANISH DIPLOMATS HERE.

FOLLOWING THE VICTORY OF THE REVOLUTION IN 1959, GUTIERREZ MENOYO, WHO WAS NEVER PART OF FIDEL CASTRO'S JULY 26TH MOVEMENT AND WHOSE +SECOND ESCAMBRAY FRONT+ FOUGHT INDEPENDENTLY OF CASTRO'S +REBEL ARMY+, LEFT FOR THE UNITED STATES WHERE HE ORGANIZED THE PARAMILITARY ANTI-CASTRO +ALPHA 66+. HE RETURNED CLANDESTINELY TO CUBA IN 1965 TO ORGANIZE THE OVERTHROW OF CASTRO'S SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT, WAS ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO THIRTY YEARS IN JAIL.

SPAIN CONSIDERS MENOYO A SPANISH CITIZEN AND CUBAN CONSIDERS HIM CUBAN. A SPANISH MAGAZINE THIS WEEK, CAMBIO 16, SAID THAT +THE LIBERATION OF GUTIERREZ MENOYO IS ALREADY A CERTAINTY+ AND IT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE SUCCESS OF PREMIER GONZALEZ' VISIT TO CUBA DEPENDS ON THE LIBERATION OF GUTIERREZ MENOYO.

A SPANISH DIPLOMATIC SOURCE SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO PREVIOUS AGREEMENT WITH CUBA CONCERNING GUTIERREZ MENOYO AND THAT PREMIER GONZALEZ DOES NOT CONSIDER THE PRISONERS LIBERATION AS A MEASURE OF HIS SUCCESS. CUBAN OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT THEY DO NOT KNOW WHETHER CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO WILL BE DISPOSED TO OFFER THIS KIND OF OLIVE BRANCH TO GONZALEZ AT THE PRESENT MOMENT.

THE CUBAN OFFICIALS CHARGE THAT MENOYO WAS BACKED BY THE CIA AND THAT HIS ORGANIZATION, ALPHA 66 HAS CARRIED OUT TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CUBA AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF MANY CUBANS. ONE CUBAN OFFICIAL SAID THAT IF CASTRO DECIDES TO FREE GUTIERREZ MENOYO IT WILL BE DONE AS A VERY PERSONAL FAVOR TO THE SPANISH PREMIER.

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