GENERAL SPINOLA'S JUNTA

1. I had a long talk after dinner last night at the Swiss Embassy with Dr Calvet de Magalhaes, the Secretary General of the MFA who is currently in charge of the Ministry. While I would, of course, have avoided any official contact with him until such time as we had recognised the new regime, since this was a private dinner party, conversation was unofficial and he was in chatty mood.

2. Calvet said that he had had a number of interviews with Spinola since the coup, the latest being only an hour before the dinner party. He was convinced that Spinola was acting according to a firm and pre-determined plan. The first phase of this plan was to re-establish and confirm the military hierarchy; this had been badly disrupted by the number of senior officers who had had to be dropped owing to their lack of support or enthusiasm for the Junta. However, new appointments had now been made (some of these have been announced in the press) and the chain of command was now once more firmly delineated. Spinola considered this should enable him to cope with any excesses by the crowds on May Day.

3. Calvet understood that Spinola certainly expected and hoped to be appointed as President of the Republic by the Junta very shortly. He would then waste no time in appointing his provisional Government. Calvet considered, however, that he did not intend to attempt to make this provisional Government into a broadly based administration, including representatives of the widest possible spectrum of parties. He intended rather that his provisional Government should be essentially a caretaker one and he would be appointing people of sound administrative experience rather than those enjoying popular support. Calvet said that there would probably be "at least one member of Caetano's Government" in Spinola's team, and agreed with my guess that this might be Veiga Simão - the former Minister of Education. Although he said nothing to indicate this, it would seem quite probable that Calvet himself might be asked to be a caretaker Foreign Minister.

4. The top priority for the provisional Government would be the setting up and supervision of democratic political machinery. It was necessary that this should be built up from the grass roots as at present there was nothing - in Calvet's view except the wildest demagogy. Calvet made no bones that he
felt it had been premature and unwise to release so many political prisoners and to allow into the country so many political agitators before any sort of machinery had been established for the surveillance of these people; he had no brief for the DGS but he added "every country needs some organisation to keep an eye on its firebrands".

5. Calvet is, of course, an establishment figure himself and there may be an element of wishful thinking in the policies he attributes to Spinola. But he told me that he had never met Spinola in his life before the coup and I think he is more likely to be basing himself of what has been said to him by Spinola than on any preconceived ideas.

J B Ure

The crowds are assembling in the centre of town. Six helicopters are hovering over, one cheek to the heavy day jumper while I sign this!