Beat: Politics

Felipe VI: It is opportune to recognize the full validity of our democracy

Anniversary of the 1981 coup attempt

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USPA NEWS - Spain celebrated on Tuesday the 40th anniversary of the attempted coup that, on February 23, 1981, tried to subvert the constitutional order approved by the Spaniards in a referendum just three years earlier. A group of civil guards, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina, stormed Congress, while armored military units took to the streets in Valencia. The coup attempt failed on the morning of February 24, after a long night of negotiations. The Congress of Deputies, the scene of that coup attempt, hosted an institutional act with the assistance of King Felipe VI of Spain, highlighted the important role played by his father, King Emeritus Juan Carlos I, whose determination aborted the coup d'état.

In a speech delivered in the Hall of Lost Steps of the Congress of Deputies, Felipe VI stated that “today, as King, symbol of the unity and permanence of the State, my commitment to the Constitution is stronger and more firm than ever. As the will of the Crown to be an institution that includes, integrates and unites all Spaniards is also unequivocal."

Upon his arrival at the Parliament, the King was received by the Prime Minister, Pedro SÃ¡nchez; the president of the Congress of Deputies, Meritxell Batet; the president of the Senate, Pilar Llop; the president of the Constitutional Court, Juan José GonzÃ¡lez Rivas; and the president of the Supreme Court and of the General Council of the Judicial Power, Carlos Lesmes; among other authorities. The King then went to the Congressional Clock Desk, where he greeted the guests at the event. Later, he took his place in the row of honor, in the Hall of Lost Steps, where the president of the Congress of Deputies opened the turn of interventions.

In his address, Felipe VI affirmed that “the anniversary that we remember today obliges us to value with serenity and rigor the irreplaceable democratic principle that underpins our coexistence. Respect for the social and democratic State of Law in which Spain has been established since 1978 and which we have built for more than four decades, step by step and shoulder to shoulder, is a prerequisite and necessary for that coexistence and for the progress of our society.“ And he added: "Hence, all of us - citizens and institutions - must feel committed and obliged to defend, protect and preserve our coexistence in democracy and freedom."

The King explained that “40 years ago today, Spain experienced an attack of extraordinary gravity against its democratic system of rights and freedoms, approved by the 1978 Constitution. The Congress of Deputies remained temporarily captive due to the actions of forces contrary to the path of freedom. and progress undertaken by the Spanish with great enthusiasm and hope for the future.“ But “the institutional and citizen rejection of the rupture of our framework of coexistence was decisive to stop and defeat that coup d'état. Likewise, the deep democratic conviction of the parliamentarians and members of the Government, who during those long hours from February 23 to 24, 1981, were held here in this Chamber, confirmed the feelings of the citizens they represented and those they served."

Recalling those moments, the King continued, “I want, with great admiration and gratitude, to signify in the person of the President of the Government Adolfo SuÃ¡rez GonzÃ¡lez, a long list of men and women, civilians and military, that we all have in mind, that they offered that night, also together with the media, an example of courage and loyalty to the institutions of the State and to our Constitution."

"And in the face of that unacceptable fracture of the legitimate and legal democratic order, King Juan Carlos I assumed as Head of State his responsibility and his commitment to the Constitution so that - and I quote - "all the necessary measures to maintain constitutional order within the current legislation." Thus he communicated it to all Spaniards in a televised message that is already part of our collective memory. His firmness and authority were decisive for the defense and triumph of democracy,“ said Felipe VI. “That night I was also a witness - still a child - of that historical episode and I learned the immense, the incalculable value that freedom has for the Spanish people,“ he explained.

Referring to the Constitution, the King stated that “today, when we celebrate the victory of democracy on February 23, 1981, it is a very opportune occasion to recognize and praise the full validity and strength of its values and principles; and to reaffirm and renew the commitment of all State institutions to our democratic system of rights and freedoms. We owe it to those who defended him then; we owe it to the new generations in whose hands the future of Spain will be; in short, we owe it to the Spanish people who, days after that

night that we remember today, expressed in an exemplary way their defense of freedom, democracy and the Constitution."

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