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Juan Carlos strengthens U.S. ties

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Prospects for the future of democracy in Spain seem brighter to official Washington after the visit here of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia.

Senators and congressmen who heard his address and later lunched with the King at the Capitol say they found him energetic and intelligent, but above all sincere in his determination to develop a constitutional monarchy at the head of a truly democratic government.

"I found him a liberal and intelligent young man," observed Sen. Mike Mansfield, the Democratic leader of the Senate. "It is not going to be easy for him to put across his ideas, but he seems to have plenty of energy."

Sen. Jacob K. Javits says he found the King "a modern man, one who wants to bring his country into an era of democracy, and also into NATO and the European Common Market."

"However," he adds, "the extent of his success will depend a lot on what [the late Generalissimo] Franco left him in the way of power and possibilities. His ideas are okay."

Former dictator Franco, who arranged restoration of the House of Borbon, and who was

no friend of democracy, was rarely mentioned during the royal couple's two days in the capital.

That the King made his first overseas trip to the United States indicates the importance he attaches to Washington's approval of what he is trying to do.

Apart from economic assistance, which flows under U.S.-Spain military-bases agreement, and which amounts to \$2 billion over five years, the U.S. is seen by the King as the power that can influence Western Europe to admit Spain to full participation in the Western community.

His immediate opposition within Spain comes from the conservative right wing, consisting of senior military officers, old-line politicians, and other supporters of the late General Franco, who fear that any opening of the political system to democracy would lead to anarchy.

While more reigning than ruling under the Spanish Constitution, King Juan Carlos is not without power. He can, most importantly, appoint and dismiss the prime minister.

A young nation

"Spain today," the King told Congress, "is a young and renewed nation. Two-thirds of us are under 40 years of age. We are an old race, but at the same time a new people."

"There is no obstacle that can prevent our community from pushing ahead, working toward the creation of a society that grows in prosperity, justice, and authentic liberty."

The process of growth since King Juan Carlos ascended the throne has been in progress for six months. Some regard it as a period of transition toward democracy. Others worry that it might lead to an explosion similar to the disorders that engulfed neighboring Portugal after the fall of its dictatorship.

After a ceremonious welcome at the White House focused on Spain's role in the history of America and the bicentennial celebration, the King addressed the joint houses of Congress June 2. He and the Queen returned to the White House for a glittering, formal state dinner in the evening.

Bicentennial gifts presented by Spain climaxed with the unveiling of a 66-ton, 20-foot high statue of Don Quixote. The work of the Spanish sculptor Aurelio Teno, a descendant of Maya Indians. The sculpture now stands at the northeast side of the John F. Kennedy Center.