When Spanish troops began to mobilise on 17 July 1936 in colonial Africa, no one expected that a full-scale civil war was about to be unleashed. Even the officers involved in the conspiracy were convinced that their well-prepared and organised attack would overwhelm the enemy as soon as they took control of the Republican capital, Madrid. Besides, their intent was not to question the legitimacy of the Republican system, but instead merely to topple the sitting government. Beyond that, their political objectives were not well defined. Although the military’s preparations for the insurrection had been an open secret for a long time, the government of Prime Minister Casares Quiroga, while having been repeatedly informed of the preparations, proved incapable of thwarting the insurrection. Meanwhile, most of the trade unions and political parties associated with the workers’ movement were actively preparing for the possibility of a confrontation. On 18 July, Franco in the Canary Islands, Queipo de Llano in Seville, and the leaders of other military fortifications in Andalucía joined the rebellion. On the evening of 19 July, Casares Quiroga resigned his position as prime minister, and on the next day the rebellion spread to most of the garrisons on the peninsula. Although Diego Martínez Barrios, the government’s new leader, apparently met with General Emilio Mola to ask the officers to reconsider their plan, in the end the Republican government could not reach a political solution to the crisis.
In Catalonia, the revolt had also been planned far in advance. As early as February 1936, Captain Luis López Valera of the Catalan section of the right-wing Spanish Military Union (Unión Militar Española, or UME), had begun preparations for the insurgency. In a few short months, the UME succeeded in branching out to all the Catalan military garrisons. Victory was not certain, however: although the anti-Republican officers were very active, many officers still supported the Republic. In fact, like high-ranking officers in other Republican territories, the Catalan general Francisco Llano de la Encomienda opposed the coup preparations. Consequently, the conspirators turned to General Manuel Goded, who, it was decided, would come to Catalonia to lead the rebellion once it had triumphed at his own garrison on the island of Mallorca. In the meantime, Álvaro Fernández Burriel, the Cavalry General, would lead the revolt along with a junta of fellow officers.

The officers’ extensive preparations for victory can be seen in documents that were found in the home of Captain López Valera after the revolt’s failure. These documents show that power would have been given primarily to military personnel in the new government:

**Barcelona**

Civil Governor: Emeterio Saz Álvarez, Colonel of the Infantry
Mayor: Francisco Isarre Bescós, retired Lieutenant Colonel
President of the City Council: Emilio Pujol Rodríguez, retired Quartermaster Colonel
Chief of Police: Luis López Varela, Captain of Artillery
Chief of Catalan Police (Mossos d’Esquadra): Fernando Lizcano de la Rosa, Captain of Infantry
Aerodrome Chief: Rafael Botana Salgado, Aviation Commander
Postmaster General: Eduardo González Feijóo, retired Commander of Artillery
Head of Telegraph Administration: Andrés Martínez Uría, retired Commander of Infantry
Director of the Modelo Prison: Alfonso Rojas
Rector of the University: Gonzalo del Castillo Alonso
Head of the armed organisation Civic Union (Unión Cívica): Félix Negrete Rabella, retired Commander of Artillery

**Girona**

Civil Governor: Jesús Martínez Lage, Legal Captain
President of the City Council: Jaume Bartrina Mas, Lawyer
Military Commander: Rafael Sanz Gracia, Colonel of Infantry