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FM MADRID 201744Z APRIL 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 208 OF 20 APRIL

INFO PRIORITY LISBON UKDEL NATO WASHINGTON GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR
(PERSONAL)

YOUR TELNO 121: ANGLO SPANISH RELATIONS

WHEN I RANG THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE ACTION TAKEN BY MR BYATT THIS MORNING WITH THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTER REGARDING SPANISH MEMBERSHIP OF NATO (LISBON TELNO 64) THE MINISTER INVITED ME TO CALL THIS AFTERNOON. HE EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR OUR HELP IN LISBON. THE MATTER HAD NOW BEEN SORTED OUT. THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD INDEED ISSUE A STATEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. THE LATTER HAD UNDERTAKEN TO SUBMIT THE QUESTION OF RATIFICATION TO THEIR ASSEMBLY ON 22 APRIL.

2. WE THEN SPOKE ABOUT THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. I CONVEYED THE LATEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT HMG'S POSITION. I AGAIN EMPHASISED THAT THE PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATIONS WERE THE WISHES OF THE ISLANDERS THEMSELVES AND THE IMPERATIVE NEED TO COUNTER AGGRESSION. I ADDED THAT, AS CALVO SOTELO HAD POINTED OUT, THE SITUATION IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT IN GIBRALTAR. AS RUPEREZ HAD RECENTLY FOUND, THE PEOPLE OF GIBRALTAR WERE AWARE THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT SOUGHT TO PROSECUTE THEIR AIMS THROUGH THE PATH OF PEACEFUL NEGOTIATION. BUT WHAT CONFIDENCE COULD THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS HAVE IN A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP, WITH A BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, WHICH HAD ACTUALLY INVADDED THEM? PEREZ-LLORCA SAID THAT OF COURSE ON THIS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF AGGRESSION VERSUS PEACEFUL MEANS THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WERE ENTIRELY ON OUR SIDE. THE TROUBLE FOR THEM IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAD BEEN THE COUPLING OF GIBRALTAR AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS IN PREVIOUS UN RESOLUTIONS. I SAID FRANKLY THAT THE SPANISH POSITION HAD BEEN MORE HELPFUL IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, WHERE THEY HAD AT LEAST GONE ALONG WITH THE CONSENSUS, THOUGH WITH AN EXPLANATION TO COVER THE GIBRALTAR POINT. I HOPED THIS COULD BECOME A PRECEDENT, SO THAT SPAIN WAS ABLE TO DISPLAY SOLIDARITY WITH HER EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND ALLIES.

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3. PEREZ-LLORCA REPEATED THAT HE WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THIS ASPECT. HE DID NOT DISSENT WHEN I SAID THAT I HAD NOW BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE TO HIM A POINT WHICH HE AND I HAD ALREADY AGREED UPON AT OUR LAST MEETING. THIS WAS THAT, WITH PARLIAMENTARY OPINION IN BRITAIN RUNNING VERY HIGH, THE WAY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT DEALT WITH THE FALKLANDS AND GIBRALTAR PROBLEMS WOULD INEVITABLY AFFECT YOUR ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE IN BEING HELPFUL OVER NATO MATTERS AND SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE COMMUNITY. THIS WAS NO THREAT BUT A SIMPLE STATEMENT OF THE FACTS, NOT LEAST BECAUSE THE AGREED SCENARIO FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LISBON AGREEMENT NOW MEANT THAT SPAIN WAS LIKELY TO ENTER NATO WITH THE GIBRALTAR FRONTIER STILL SHUT, IF ONLY FOR SHORT TIME. I UNDERSTOOD THAT PEREZ-LLORCA HAD TO THINK ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION IN SPAIN AND PERHAPS EVEN IN ARGENTINA. BUT HE MUST NOT FORGET WESTERN EUROPE, INCLUDING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

4. PEREZ-LLORCA SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO BE EQUALLY FRANK WITH ME. HE WAS EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO PLAY THE WHOLE FALKLANDS AND GIBRALTAR COMPLEX IN A MANNER COMPATIBLE WITH THE MAIN THRUST OF SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH INCLUDED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN. BUT HE DID NOT ALWAYS FIND IT EASY TO OBTAIN A CONSENSUS ABOUT THIS, EVEN WITHIN HIS OWN MINISTRY. IN CASE OF DIFFICULTY, I SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO APPROACH HIM DIRECT. BY CONTRAST, HE HAD NOT HAD ANY RECENT CONTACT WITH THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR.

5. PLEASE SEE MY IFT.

PARSONS

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SE D
DEF. D
SAMB
PUSD
EM: UNIT
PS
PS/MR HUND

PS/LORD BELSTAD
PS/PUS
MR BULLARD
MR GOODISON
MR GILLMORE

ADDITIONAL DIST:
GIBRALTAR

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