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GRS 420

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FM MADRID 111000Z APRIL 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 229 OF 11 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL), MODUK.

INFO PRIORITY RABAT

deal in full.
MS

YOUR TELNO 117: FLEET VISIT TO GIBRALTAR.

1. I WAS SUMMONED ON SATURDAY 9 APRIL TO SEE THE DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY (BERDEJO). HE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO EXPRESS SURPRISE AND DEEP CONCERN AT THE NEWS, RECEIVED FROM GIBRALTAR, OF AN IMMINENT VISIT THERE BY A BRITISH FLEET INCLUDING HMS INVINCIBLE WITH PRINCE ANDREW ON BOARD. IN VIEW OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE SHIPS WITH THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN, AND PARTICULARLY THE PRESENCE OF PRINCE ANDREW, THERE WAS BOUND TO BE A STRONGLY HOSTILE REACTION IN SPAIN. MORAN WISHED YOU TO BE WARNED OF THIS IN ADVANCE AND TO KNOW THAT IT COULD ONLY BE HARMFUL TO ANGLO-SPANISH RELATIONS.

2. I SPOKE AS INSTRUCTED, ADDING THAT I HAD JUST RECEIVED AUTHORITY TO NOTIFY THE MINISTRY IN ADVANCE. I EXPLAINED THAT WE HELD FLEET TRAINING EXERCISES ANNUALLY EACH SPRING IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC. MY NAVAL ATTACHE HAD ALREADY INFORMED THE SPANISH NAVY OF OUR INTENTION TO DO SO. PRINCE ANDREW WOULD BE COMING IN HIS CAPACITY AS A SERVING OFFICER OF THE ROYAL NAVY. THERE WERE NO ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY SPECIAL RECEPTION FOR HIM. AS A PROFESSIONAL NAVAL OFFICER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE OUT OF THE QUESTION TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE SHIP.

3. BERDEJO SAID THAT HIS MINISTER AND HE UNDERSTOOD THESE POINTS. BUT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION WOULD DO SO. THEY WOULD SEE THIS AS A DELIBERATE GESTURE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE LINK WITH THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN. NOR WOULD THE GIBRALTARIANS THEMSELVES BE IN THE LEAST LIKELY TO PLAY DOWN THE VISIT OF PRINCE ANDREW, HOWEVER DISCREET THE GOVERNOR MIGHT WISH TO BE.

4. BERDEJO ADDED ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT NOW FOR MORAN TO MAKE PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LISBON AGREEMENT, AS HAD BEEN HOPED. INDEED IT WAS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT MORAN WOULD FEEL ABLE TO MEET YOU FOR A BILATERAL TALK ON 25 APRIL. BERDEJO ADDED BLUNTLY THAT MORAN WAS UNDER ATTACK ON SEVERAL FRONTS. HE WAS VERY NERVOUS ABOUT HIS OWN POSITION. THIS FLEET VISIT TO GIBRALTAR WOULD BE YET ANOTHER BLOW. I SAID IT WAS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO PROPHECY PUBLIC REACTIONS IN ADVANCE. THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO THEIR BEST TO DAMP DOWN THE TENSION, AS WOULD WE. THE POSITION WOULD BECOME CLEARER BY THE END OF A WEEK.

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/S. BERDEJO

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5. BERDEJO WAS CAREFUL NOT(NOT) TO REQUEST THE CANCELLATION OF ANY PART OF THE VISIT SUCH AS THE PRESENCE OF PRINCE ANDREW. HIS APPROACH MAY HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY LEFT UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO SO. HE REVEALED THAT THEY HAD KNOWN ABOUT THE VISIT FOR SOME TIME. NOR DID HE LINK THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH ANOTHER ROW WHICH HAS ARISEN OVER MOROCCAN RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF THEIR AIR SPACE. THIS AFFECTS FLIGHTS BETWEEN MAINLAND SPAIN AND THE CANARIES. IT HAS BEEN LINKED IN THE PRESS WITH CURRENT MOROCCAN MANOEUVRES WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE COINCIDENCE IS NOT FORTUNATE.

6. AS FORESHADOWED BY BERDEJO, THE FLEET VISIT TO GIBRALTAR COULD PROVIDE MORAN WITH A FURTHER PRETEXT FOR DUCKING OUT OF EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LISBON AGREEMENT. BUT I DOUBT WHETHER IT WOULD BE THE DETERMINING FACTOR FOR THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT IF THEIR PRIME MINISTER WERE TO DECIDE TO ATTACH FULLER WEIGHT TO THE ARGUMENTS WE PUT TO HIM LAST WEEK. WE SHALL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

PARSONS

GIBRALTAR

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FM MADRID 111056Z APRIL 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 231 OF 11 APRIL
INFO IMMEDIATE GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL), MODUK.

MY TELNO 229: FLEET VISIT TO GIBRALTAR.

1. BERDEJO HAS TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER HAS BEEN BROODING OVER THIS MATTER DURING THE WEEKEND. HE IMPLIED THAT MORAN WAS IN A CONSIDERABLE STATE OF FLAP. THE LATTER HAD DECIDED THAT, IN SELF-PROTECTION, HE MUST ISSUE A STATEMENT TODAY RECORDING HIS OPINION OF THE VISIT ALONG THE LINES ALREADY COMMUNICATED TO ME. MORAN HAD INSTRUCTED THAT I SHOULD BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE AS A MATTER OF COURTESY.

2. I SAID THAT IT WAS OF COURSE UP TO THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO DECIDE WHETHER TO MAKE HIS VIEWS PUBLIC. NEVERTHELESS, I HOPED I MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO MAKE TWO PERSONAL COMMENTS. FIRST, I SUGGESTED THAT AN ADVANCE STATEMENT BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO INFLAME THAN TO CALM SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION. WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER TO AWAIT PUBLIC REACTION BEFORE MAKING A STATEMENT? SECONDLY, I SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO AVOID ANY UNFORTUNATE LOCAL INCIDENT. THE SPANISH NAVY WERE OF COURSE UNDER FIRM POLITICAL CONTROL FROM MADRID. BUT INDIVIDUAL NAVAL COMMANDERS IN THE GIBRALTAR AREA HAD SEEMED PRONE TO TAKE INITIATIVES ON THEIR OWN. SUCH A TENDENCY COULD BE ENCOURAGED BY A SPANISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT IN ADVANCE. WITHOUT WISHING TO APPEAR TO INTERVENE IN SPANISH INTERNAL AFFAIRS, I HOPED THAT THE SPANISH MINISTER OF DEFENCE COULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE PICTURE ON AN URGENT BASIS.

3. BERDEJO RECEIVED THESE COMMENTS IN GOOD PART. HE SAID THAT IT WAS TOO LATE TO DISCOURAGE HIS MINISTER FROM ISSUING A STATEMENT. MORAN HAD PREPARED IT HIMSELF. BERDEJO DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT ACTUALLY SAID. BUT HE AGREED WITH ME ABOUT THE NEED TO WARN THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE. HE WOULD MAKE SURE THIS WAS DONE AT ONCE.

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