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FM MADRID 231522Z JUN 83

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 382 OF 23 JUNE

INFO PRIORITY GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR), WASHINGTON,

UKDEL NATO AND MODUK

dead in full

MY TELEGRAMS NUMBERS 379 AND 380 : GIBRALTAR AND NATO

1. I CALLED THIS MORNING ON BERDEJO (DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY) PRIMARILY TO THANK HIM FOR THE HELP GIVEN BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT OVER THE RETURN OF OUR HARRIER.
2. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFER TO THE ALLEGED REMARKS BY MORAN IN BONN ABOUT NOT ACCEPTING THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS OF JANUARY 1982. BERDEJO SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER MORAN HAD ACTUALLY SAID THIS. HE WOULD FIND OUT FOR ME. I SAID THAT MORAN HAD MADE CLEAR IN LONDON HIS OBJECTION TO ONE ASPECT OF THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS NAMELY THAT, ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LISBON AGREEMENT, SPANIARDS WOULD NOT HAVE IN GIBRALTAR STATUS EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF COMMUNITY CITIZENS. BUT, AS BERDEJO HIMSELF HAD POINTED OUT TO ME AT THE TIME, MORAN HAD BEEN AT PAINS NOT TO APPEAR TO ABROGATE UNILATERALLY THE EXCHANGES SIGNED WITH THE CALVO SOTELO GOVERNMENT. IF HE WERE NOW TO DO SO, THAT WOULD BE A STEP BACKWARDS. THE EFFECT ON BRITISH MINISTERS AND PUBLIC OPINION IN BRITAIN AND GIBRALTAR WOULD BE HARMFUL TO BOTH SIDES.
3. BERDEJO REPLIED THAT HE ACCEPTED THIS POINT. MORAN'S TACTICAL DIFFICULTY IN LONDON HAD BEEN THAT HE SOUGHT TO EXPRESS OBJECTION TO ONE ASPECT OF THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITHOUT ACTUALLY REJECTING THEM IN TERMS. THAT IS WHY HE HAD FELT NON-PLUSSED WHEN BRITISH MINISTERS HAD KEPT REFERRING TO THE EXCHANGE. IF IN FUTURE MINISTERIAL CONTACTS WE COULD SOFT PEDAL ON THIS POINT, IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR MORAN TO AVOID BEING DRIVEN INTO A CORNER WHERE HE FELT OBLIGED TO REPUDIATE THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS. WE SHOULD TRY TO STICK TO THE GENERAL POSITION THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS REMAIN ON COURSE TO IMPLEMENT THE LISBON DECLARATION EVEN THOUGH THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT MIGHT SEEK CLARIFICATION ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS IN PRACTICE.
4. I THEN TOOK UP THE SCENARIO APPARENTLY ENVISAGED BY FELIPE GONZALEZ IN WHICH A REFERENDUM ON NATO MEMBERSHIP WITHIN TWO YEARS WOULD BE COLOURED FOR THE SPANISH PEOPLE BY ASSURANCE OF EC MEMBERSHIP AND SOME PROGRESS ON THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER GIBRALTAR. BERDEJO COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT GONZALEZ HAD SPOKEN IN THESE TERMS. HE HAD TAKEN THIS LINE FREQUENTLY BOTH IN PUBLIC AND IN PRIVATE. I POINTED OUT THAT THE REMOVAL OF ALL RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATION WITH GIBRALTAR WAS AN IMPORTANT PRE-ESSENTIAL FOR PROGRESS ON ALL FRONTS. NEGOTIATIONS COULD THEN BEGIN ON ALL OUTSTANDING GIBRALTAR ISSUES INCLUDING SOVEREIGNTY: A COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR THE AREA COULD BE DISCUSSED: AND HMG WOULD BE LEFT WITH NO OBSTACLE TO THEIR FULL SUPPORT FOR SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE COMMUNITY, REAFFIRMED YESTERDAY IN THE QUEEN'S SPEECH. BUT THERE WAS ONE

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POINT TO BE WATCHED CAREFULLY. THE NEGOTIATIONS ENVISAGED COULD WELL BE STARTED WITHIN TWO YEARS, OR INDEED MUCH BEFORE, IF SPAIN WERE WILLING TO IMPLEMENT THE LISBON AGREEMENT. BUT IT WOULD BE QUITE MISLEADING FOR GONZALEZ TO THINK THAT ANY SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS OVER RECOVERY OF SOVEREIGNTY COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHIN THAT PERIOD. THIS WOULD INVOLVE A CHANGE OF HEART AMONG THE GIBRALTAR PEOPLE WHICH IN TURN DEPENDED ON A MORE ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. BERDEJO SAID THAT HE THOUGHT GONZALEZ WAS UNDER NO MISUNDERSTANDING ON THIS POINT. THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES MIGHT WELL TAKE TWENTY YEARS. WHAT GONZALEZ NEEDED BEFORE THE REFERENDUM WAS SOME INDICATION OF PROGRESS ALONG A LONG ROAD.

5. BERDEJO SAID THAT MORAN WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE ESSENTIAL PART PLAYED BY THE GIBRALTAR QUESTION IN THESE ISSUES CENTRAL TO SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY. HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOU SOON BUT HOPED THERE COULD FIRST BE PREPARATION AT OFFICIAL LEVEL.

6. BERDEJO ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT IT ALSO IMPORTANT TO TRY TO THICKEN UP OTHER MINISTERIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. IT WAS ABSURD FOR ANGLO-SPANISH RELATIONS TO BE DOMINATED SOLELY BY THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE. HE LIKED THE IDEA OF AN EXCHANGE OF VISITS BY MINISTERS DEALING WITH OTHER FIELDS SUCH AS EDUCATION AND CULTURE (HERVEY'S TELELETTER OF 21 JUNE TO HEAD OF SED).

PARSONS

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