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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 February 1980

Dear Mr. President,

Your Private Secretary has been in contact with mine by telephone to stress the great importance which you attach to fishing by Spanish fishermen in the waters of EEC member states and in particular to the licences issued for hake fishing.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has also reported to me the representations made to him by the Spanish Ambassador on several occasions most recently on 25 January. The Ambassador stressed the importance of the fishing industry to Spain and the political significance of the fishing licences issue for the Spanish Government especially in certain regions of the country.

I fully understand your problems. But Mr. Walker has explained to the Ambassador the difficulties faced by our fishermen who have to cope with falling catch rates and mounting costs and who have recently been excluded from important areas where they had traditionally fished. These difficulties constitute a very real political problem for the United Kingdom government which we are seeking to have resolved within the European Community.

The problems facing Spain, the United Kingdom and, no doubt, other member states of the Community in the fishing sector are serious. They are bound to make for complex and difficult negotiations between Spain and the EEC. I was very pleased

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therefore to learn that at the negotiations in Brussels on
4 February it proved possible to reach an agreement for 1980.

Yours sincerely

Raouf Taha

His Excellency Senor Don Adolfo Suarez Gonzalez.