

Prime Minister

Ref. A09460

PRIME MINISTER

Yes please  
not

Shall I say that you would like the operational implications to be considered urgently and a report on these to be made available on your return from the Far East. Also that we be kept informed of any new developments being your scheme?

A.F.C. 14/9

In my minute (A09169) to you of 30th July 1982, covering a note by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) about the warning time we might currently expect to receive of any Spanish military action against Gibraltar, I noted that the JIC had put in hand a more detailed examination of the threat and of the implications that might have for the warning time. The JIC have now completed this further work and I attach their recent Note on the subject (JIC(82)(N)88 dated 9th September 1982).

2. The JIC judge that an attack on Gibraltar authorised by a senior Spanish military commander at the national or Regional level would be likely only in a situation of marked political instability such as does not obtain at present. But at a lower level a number of military units in southern Spain could in theory attempt an unauthorised operation designed to occupy all or part of Gibraltar. The need to keep preparations secret from superior authorities, together with logistic problems, tends to rule out all units except those based close to Gibraltar. Without helicopter, amphibious or armoured support a local commander would be faced with making a direct infantry assault on the frontier. The regiment stationed at San Roque, 8 kilometres from Gibraltar, and at the frontier at La Linea poses the most immediate threat.

3. We have no knowledge of the personalities or political attitudes of the commanding officers of the units most likely to be involved, and no reason to believe that they would act in this way. Action initiated by a hot-headed officer or one who believed that it would be sanctioned by his military superiors cannot be ruled out; but the chances of such sanction or support being forthcoming, and indeed the likelihood of an attack authorised at national or regional level, must be markedly reduced by Spanish membership of NATO.



4. In certain circumstances, and assuming certain intelligence operations were functioning, a maximum 3 hours' warning might be received of an impending attack involving armour, helicopter transport support or amphibious forces. Detection of an unauthorised infantry operation could not be guaranteed, and it could be mounted without our receiving any warning. Moreover, there can be no guarantee that in any of these circumstances we should receive any warning of an impending attack.

5. Departments are now giving consideration to the operational implications of this Note, taking account of your discussion of 4th August with Permanent Secretaries and the Chief of the Defence Staff.

6. I am copying this minute to the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and for Defence.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13th September 1982



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES ..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>770</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	
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SECRET

FILE

SW

14



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 30 July to which was attached a JIC note about the warning which we could expect to receive of a military attack on Gibraltar.

The Prime Minister would like to discuss this problem this week. We shall be making arrangements separately for a meeting at which we hope you, Sir Frank Cooper, Sir Antony Acland and Mr. Patrick Wright could be present. I am copying this minute to them.

A. J. COLES

2 August, 1982

SECRET

SW

GRS 240  
UNCLASSIFIED  
FM MADRID 021210Z AUG 82  
TO ROUTINE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 443 OF 2 AUGUST  
INFO GIBRALTAR

PS. NO 10, DOWNING STREET.

*M*

GIBRALTAR

THE MADRID DAILY 'YA' OF 1 AUGUST PUBLISHES 3 PAGE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH HASSAN (COPIES BY BAG) . MAIN POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) "THE GIBRALTARIANS DO NOT WANT TO BE SPANISH". " BUT THE CONCEPT OF SELF DETERMINATION IS A LIVING CONCEPT SO I CANNOT DETERMINE THE WISHES OF FUTURE GENERATIONS: .... IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH THE HISTORY, THE ATTEMPTS TO SUBJUGATE GIBRALTAR WITH RESTRICTIONS, AND THE CONTRAST BETWEEN OUR SOCIETY AND WELL BEING COMPARED WITH WHAT WE SEE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FRONTIER, THIS GENERATION WILL NEVER WISH TO BE SPANISH."

B) HE EXPRESSES OPPOSITION TO PARTIAL OPENING OF FRONTIER FOR A FEW PRIVILEGED PEOPLE OR FOR AN OPENING WHICH DESCRIMINATES AGAINST ANY GROUP INCLUDING FOREIGNERS WHO WISH TO VISIT GIBRALTAR FROM SPAIN.

C) HE PRAISES OREJA'S COURAGE IN SIGNING LISBON AGREEMENT AND REFERS IN DETAIL TO DISILLUSIONMENT CAUSED BY 3 POSTPONEMENTS OF LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS FOR WHICH HE BLAMES SPAIN. ACCUSES SPAIN OF MAKING PRE-CONDITIONS FOR FULFILLING LISBON AGREEMENT. "IF PEREZ LLORCA WANTS THIS 275 YEAR OLD PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED IN 4 OR 5 MEETINGS, WE ARE WASTING TIME - HIS FEET ARE NOT ON THE GROUND."

D) SPAIN KNOWS THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION BUT WANTS TO IGNORE IT. HE AGREES WITH INTERVIEWER THAT SPAIN IS DECEIVING ITSELF OVER ITS HOPES FOR NEGOTIATIONS. IF THERE IS TO BE A CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY SOME TIME IT MUST COME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF NATURAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND NOT FROM A POLITICAL PROPOSAL WHICH PRE-JUDGES THE SITUATION.

PARSONS

LIMITED  
SED  
UND  
DEF D  
ECD (E)  
NEWS D  
PS  
PS|MR HURD  
PS|LORD BELSTEAD  
PS|AUS  
SIR J. BULLARD  
MR GOODISON

ADDITIONAL DISTN  
GIBRALTAR

CONFIDENTIAL

17229 - 2

PP MADRID

GRS 230

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO 021700Z AUG 82

TO PRIORITY MADRID

TELEGRAM NUMBER 260 OF 2 AUGUST

INFO ROUTINE GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL)

YOUR TELNOS 416 AND 431: PROPOSED VISIT TO GIBRALTAR BY MR BLAKER

1. I HAVE GIVEN MY AGREEMENT TO MR BLAKER'S PROPOSED VISIT TO GIBRALTAR FROM 17 TO 19 AUGUST.
2. I AM ALIVE TO THE DANGER THAT DIFFICULTIES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH SPAIN COULD BE PROVOKED BY VISITS BY BRITISH MINISTERS TO GIBRALTAR PARTICULARLY WHEN TWO VISITS COME CLOSE TOGETHER. BUT THERE ARE GOOD OPERATIONAL REASONS WHY MR BLAKER SHOULD VISIT A BRITISH TERRITORY WHERE THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE HAS SUBSTANTIAL INTERESTS. IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXAMINE THE DOCKYARD PROBLEM AT FIRST HAND, AS HE HAS DONE PREVIOUSLY AT BOTH CHATHAM AND PORTSMOUTH.
3. YOU SHOULD INFORM THE SPANISH AUTHORITIES OF THE FORTHCOMING VISIT AS A MATTER OF COURTESY JUST BEFORE THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE. THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE IN TOUCH SEPARATELY ABOUT TIMING. IF THE SPANIARDS ASK, YOU MAY ASSURE THEM OF THE PASTORAL NATURE OF THE VISIT. YOU MAY ALSO SAY THAT THERE IS NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE TWO MINISTERIAL VISITS TAKING PLACE SO CLOSE TOGETHER, EXCEPT THAT THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE DOCKYARD CREATES PROBLEMS WHICH REQUIRE MINISTERIAL ATTENTION. MR BLAKER'S OTHER ENGAGEMENTS AND PARLIAMENTARY COMMITMENTS MEAN THAT THE PLANNED DATES ARE THE ONLY FEASIBLE ONES THIS YEAR.

HURD

DIST:

LIMITED

SED

PUSD

DEF D

NEWS D

PS

ADDITIONAL DIST:

GIBRALTAR

PS/MR HURD

PS/LORD BELSTEAD

PS/PUS

MR GOODISON



The National Archives

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