



PM/81/21

PRIME MINISTER

(2)

Prime Minister

No decisions at this point

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Spain/NATO

1. On 16 March the Spanish Foreign Minister told me that, in the aftermath of the Attempted coup d'etat, Sr Calvo Sotelo's Government intended to accelerate the application for Spanish membership of NATO. He hoped it might be possible to settle the Gibraltar impasse at the same time. Calvo Sotelo told Chancellor Schmidt on 23 April that his Government wanted to take the decision on NATO before the end of the summer. The Secretary-General of NATO has consulted the Permanent Representatives of member States, who all said that their governments would be generally in favour of issuing the necessary invitation if Spain wished to accede to the North Atlantic Treaty. Sir Clive Rose confirmed that Britain did not regard Gibraltar as an obstacle.
 2. Should the Spanish Government seek an invitation and accept that the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa which are part of metropolitan Spain would not be within the NATO area, no amendment of the Treaty would be needed. The process for Spanish accession would be relatively simple. Nonetheless, Parliamentary consideration would be needed in most member countries since their NATO obligations would be extended to cover the whole of Spain, the Balearics and the Canaries. In our case it might be best to present a White Paper with the text of NATO's invitation to the Spanish Government, and allow time for debate.
 3. Neither facts nor timing on the Spanish side are yet clear. Consultations between the parties have been promised but the socialist PSOE remains formally opposed to NATO membership and it is by no means clear that they would acquiesce in a Government decision. There could be presentational difficulties over both Gibraltar and the fact that NATO as a whole will certainly not be prepared to take a commitment to defend Ceuta and Melilla. On the
- /Alliance



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Alliance side, there is a spectrum of views within the generally positive consensus. The US Administration, whose bases agreement expires in September, are (as Mr Haig confirmed to me on 10 April) strongly in favour. Spanish accession to NATO would be an early triumph for President Reagan. The Scandinavians in particular are more cautious and inclined to regard a favourable consensus in Spain as a condition. In some quarters there is nervousness about Soviet reactions.

4. The case for supporting Spanish accession is strong. It would be a major psychological boost for the Alliance and strongly reinforce the southern flank; it could help to buttress democracy within Spain. Militarily, Spanish membership would provide an important immediate addition to the conventional strength of the Alliance.

5. The Soviet Union has made a number of attempts to warn Spain off and would make all the propaganda it could over Spain's entry into NATO. But I do not consider that there would be any substantial effect on Soviet actions, for instance in increasing their pressure on Poland or Yugoslavia.

6. We have consistently said that we make no formal links between Spain's entry either to the European Community or NATO and the lifting of restrictions on Gibraltar. But, so far as the EC is concerned, we have said that a closed frontier within Community territory is inconceivable and I told the former Spanish Foreign Minister that Parliament would not ratify the necessary treaty while the border was sealed. In the case of NATO, however, it has hitherto been Spain which has made conditions, saying that NATO entry would not be possible until the Gibraltar problem was on the way to solution.

7. I intend to bring home to the Spaniards that they would be well advised on a whole variety of grounds to use NATO entry as the occasion for reopening the Gibraltar frontier

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if they have not done so before. The pressures to implement the Lisbon agreement on reopening the border would, as Sr Perez Llorca himself effectively admitted on 16 March, be very strong as Spain moved into NATO. And Spanish use of military facilities at Gibraltar, and participation in command structures affecting the Gibraltar area, would have to be blocked if the Spaniards declined to use the opportunity to move forward to negotiations over Gibraltar. Nonetheless, because of our strategic and political interest in strengthening NATO and the enthusiasm of the US Administration for Spanish membership, I am against attempting to make any formal Gibraltar condition over Spain's entry into NATO. It should be left to the Spaniards should they insist on doing so to make a linkage which our Allies will find petty and inappropriate. Unlike the EC case, there is no legal or constitutional constraint on Spain joining even with border restrictions maintained.

8. The importance of Spanish membership of NATO to the West will be generally very well understood by the Party, Parliament and the public at large. We may well, however, face some criticism if the Lisbon agreement remains unimplemented at the time of parliamentary consideration of Spain's entry. The conflict between our interest in getting the Gibraltar problem out of the way and our wider NATO interest may be shown up. I hope we shall resolve it by getting the Lisbon agreement implemented at last but, if that is not achieved, I believe that we can best pursue the two objectives without linkage.

9. With the timings very uncertain, I doubt whether discussion in OD now would be useful. But I wished to keep you and other members informed of developments. I am consequently sending copies of this minute to them and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

C

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
1 May 1981

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Spain



Ref. A04864

*She did so on
5 May.*

MR. ALEXANDER

Phms

Spain/NATO

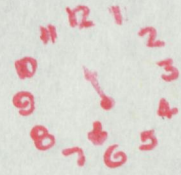
The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary
minuted the Prime Minister on this subject on 1st May.
We have ascertained that no other member of OD takes
exception to the line described in Lord Carrington's
minute. The Prime Minister may now wish to record
that she has taken note of Lord Carrington's approach.

D. J. WRIGHT

12th May, 1981

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 May 1981

SPAIN/NATO

The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute to her of 1 May on this subject.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

F. N. Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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NMS