



MO 5/16

PRIME MINISTERTHE DEFENCE OF GIBRALTARPrime Minister

The defence treaty has deliberately not copied this to anyone except the Foreign Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong. He assumes, I am sure, that you will not want to discuss this in Od tomorrow.

A.F.C. $\frac{3}{11}$

Thank you. I am relieved that all the Governor's requests ^{correctly} have been met ^{no} discuss this in Od tomorrow.

In our recent conversation you expressed continuing concern about our ability to defend Gibraltar against an attack from Spain. In the light of our conversation, I have reviewed:

- a. Our reinforcement capability.
 - b. The implications of early denial of the airfield.
 - c. Steps which have already been taken to enhance the Garrison.
2. Our contingency reinforcement plans are set out in Joint Theatre Plan (JTP) 52. This provides for three stages of reinforcement of the Garrison. Details of each of these three stages are set out at Annex.
 3. The main purpose of JTP 52 is to deter hostilities through deployment as a major - and hence probably authorised - threat develops, but before it materialises. It relies heavily on the use of the airfield. After the start of hostilities, deployment by air would almost certainly be impossible because of the vulnerability of the airfield. Deployment by sea would still be possible but hazardous in the face of determined and co-ordinated Spanish opposition. This emphasizes the need for timely and accurate intelligence about the intentions of the Spanish Government and senior armed forces commands.
 4. JTP 52 is not intended to deal with a localised unauthorised attack which could materialise quickly (although the JIC assesses



even this risk as slight). Forces already in-place in Gibraltar are capable of resisting such a threat in the terms in which it is defined by the JIC.

5. As you know, the following measures to strengthen the Garrison, requested by the Governor, have been implemented to cover the present period of uncertainty in Spain:

- a. The Guardship is remaining in the immediate area.
- b. An increased presence of RAF offensive support aircraft above the normal level of routine training deployments. Two Jaguars will be stationed there until further notice rather than paying periodic visits.
- c. Provision of a UK-manned Blowpipe troop (8 firing posts).
- d.

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- e. Cancellation of routine UK training for the Garrison regiment.
- f. A Sea Skua armed Lynx helicopter to improve surveillance and provide anti-ship attack capability (due to return shortly to UK).
- g. A low level exercise deployment of one frigate and one diesel submarine (due to depart from Gibraltar on 8th November).

6. Although the Governor has said he is content with the force level of the Garrison, a further Spanish amphibious exercise is planned for 22nd November to 3rd December. In view of this exercise and recognising the continuing political situation in Spain, retention of the Lynx helicopter and the Blowpipe unit and maintenance of the current level of RAF aircraft presence in



Gibraltar is being ordered.

7. These steps represent a substantial improvement in Gibraltar's ability to defend itself, and they cover all requests made by the Governor for immediate enhancements, with the following exceptions:

a. Light Gun. The Governor requested replacement of his existing 4 x 104 mm Pack Howitzers manned by the Gibraltar Regiment with a battery of ^{the} 6 x 105 mm Light Guns. These can be provided although/military justification for this re-equipping has not been totally proved. Nevertheless, the guns and ammunition are available; the cost to the defence vote is small; deterrence is increased; and modernisation is achieved at no penalty to UK forces. I, therefore, intend to authorise this re-equipment.

b. Blowpipe. While we can continue our policy of providing Blowpipe forces to Gibraltar during periods of perceived tension and recalling them to UK as necessary, the opportunity occurs now to meet the Governor's long-term request for provision of Blowpipe to the Gibraltar regiment. Such provision would involve a slight reduction of our reserves for two years. I intend to authorise replacement of the 4 x Bofors with 8 x Blowpipe as soon as we can train the Gibraltar Regiment.

c.

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8. I hope this meets the concerns which you expressed.



9. I am copying this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Armstrong

*Approved by the Defence Secretary
and signed in his absence.*

Ministry of Defence
3rd November 1982

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 November, 1982

The Defence of Gibraltar

The Prime Minister was grateful for the minute of 3 November by the Secretary of State for Defence on this matter. Mrs. Thatcher has minuted that she is relieved that all the Governor's requests have been met.

I am copying this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

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