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15, NO 10, DOWNING STREET.

GRS 550

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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 590 OF 8 NOVEMBER

INFO GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL), UKDEL NATO, MODUK,  
UKREP BRUSSELS, WASHINGTON, BONN.

GIBRALTAR AND THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT

I TALKED RECENTLY IN BARCELONA TO NARCIS SERRA, THE SOCIALIST MAYOR OF THAT CITY, WHO IS TIPPED AS A POSSIBLE FUTURE MINISTER OF DEFENCE. HE PUT ME ON NOTICE THAT, IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION THEY HAVE CREATED FOR THEMSELVES BY CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM ABOUT NATO MEMBERSHIP, THE SOCIALISTS WHEN IN OFFICE WOULD BE LIKELY TO LINK THE MATTER WITH PROGRESS OVER GIBRALTAR. I MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING THE HEAT ON BRITAIN THROUGH THE AMERICANS AND OUR OTHER ALLIES, AS HE SEEMED TO THINK. THE MATTER SHOULD BE VIEWED FROM THE OPPOSITE ASPECT. REMOVAL OF ALL RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS WITH GIBRALTAR WOULD ALONE MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO HOLD CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE JOINT DEFENCE OF THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR IN THE INTEREST OF THE WHOLE ALLIANCE.

2. SERRA'S FRANK SPEAKING COINCIDES WITH WARNINGS GIVEN ME BY THE PRESENT FOREIGN MINISTER THAT SOCIALIST TACTICS WOULD BE ALONG THESE LINES. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO HOLD OUR ALLIES FIRM. I AGREE WITH THE LINE IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR TELEGRAM NO. 1943 TO WASHINGTON THAT CHANGES IN COMMAND BOUNDARIES MUST BE SEEN TO BE OUT OF THE QUESTION WHILE THE BORDER REMAINS SHUT. I ALSO AGREE THAT FOR GIBRALTAR REASONS WE SHALL NOT WISH TO TAKE A LEAD IN DISCUSSIONS AT NATO ON SPANISH ACCESSION.

3. I LIKEWISE HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH THE LINE IN PARAGRAPHS 10 TO 12 OF THE PAPER ENCLOSED WITH CROWE'S LETTER TO ME OF 20 OCTOBER ABOUT THE GIBRALTAR ASPECT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE COMMUNITY. IT WILL BE BEST TO TRY TO IMPOSE ON THE COMMISSION OR PRESIDENCY, REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING IT EXPLICITLY CLEAR TO THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT THAT THE GIBRALTAR FRONTIER HAS TO BE OPENED FROM THE DATE OF ACCESSION.

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4. OUR TACTICS IN BOTH NATO AND THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BE CLOSELY RELATED. OUR POSITION ON THE LISBON AGREEMENT IS UNASSAILABLE AND WE SHOULD STAND PAT ON THAT. THIS SHOULD BE USED TO ENCOURAGE OUR ALLIES AND PARTNERS TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE NEW SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT HERE THAT FULL OPENING OF THE FRONTIER (AND NOT JUST FOR PEDESTRIANS ONLY) IS A PREREQUISITE FOR DISCUSSION ON COMMAND BOUNDARIES INVOLVING GIBRALTAR IN NATO AND FOR THE FINALISATION OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE COMMUNITY. SUCH REPRESENTATIONS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE IF THEY ARE MADE IN PRIVATE. SPANISH PRIDE AND INSECURITY, COUPLED WITH THE PROBLEM OF HANDLING THE ARMED FORCES AND RIGHT WING, WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR GONZALEZ TO OPEN THE FRONTIER IF THIS APPEARED TO BE THE RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE. OUR ALLIES AND PARTNERS WILL PRESUMABLY BE ONLY TOO WELL AWARE OF THIS CONSIDERATION. IN PRACTICE THE DIFFICULTY IS MORE LIKELY TO BE TO PERSUADE THEM TO GIVE ROBUST SUPPORT FOR THE OPENING OF THE FRONTIER THAN TO DISSUADE THEM FROM PUSHING THIS TOO FAR IN PUBLIC AT THE PRESENT TRICKY TIME OF TRANSITION HERE.

PARSONS

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 CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTN  
 GIBRALTAR