

Prime Minister



The Foreign Secretary is likely
to meet the Spanish Foreign
Minister at NATO on
2/10 December.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Content that he should be guided
by this letter?

7 December 1982

A.S.C. 7/11

Yes m

few John,

Spain/Gibraltar

In your letter of 22 November you asked for advice on how to deal with the Gibraltar question during the next few weeks in the light of the appointment of a new Government in Spain and remarks made recently by Spanish leaders. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary discussed the matter briefly with the Prime Minister on 26 November.

Since then Sr Gonzalez has said that he will recommend to his Cabinet that the border should be opened to pedestrians only. We do not yet know when this will happen; nor whether access for pedestrians will be unrestricted. Nevertheless, partial opening before Christmas now seems likely.

We signed the Lisbon agreement with the Spaniards in 1980, and have reaffirmed our commitment to it regularly since. It provides for the lifting of all restrictions on Gibraltar. At the same time negotiations are to start 'aimed at overcoming all the differences' between the British and Spanish Governments on Gibraltar. This implies that each side will be free to raise any question it wishes. The Spaniards will want to speak about the issue of sovereignty. But the Lisbon agreement itself emphasises our commitment (as in the Gibraltar Constitution) to honour the wishes of the Gibraltarians. There can be no question of any move from the British side on sovereignty in the near future.

If the Spaniards want to get on better terms with the Gibraltarians, they will have to counter the effects of the years of restrictions and blockade. The Spaniards must be brought to understand this. Part of this effort must involve the full removal of the border restrictions.

/We too



We too need this in order to allow the Gibraltar economy to develop and become less dependent on Britain for support. The moves made by Sr Gonzalez immediately on taking office show that he realises the ineffectiveness of the Franco policy of sanctions. But partial opening of the border is not enough. It will do little to help the Gibraltar economy. Nor should it cause us to alter our policy about changes in NATO affecting Gibraltar or, when the time comes, ratifying Spanish entry to the EC. Both require, at the least, a fully open border.

To get the border fully open Mr Pym believes that we must maintain our commitment to the Lisbon agreement. It would in any case be wrong to withdraw from such a public undertaking. But there can be no question of prior concessions on our part in order to persuade the Spaniards to implement the agreement. Furthermore, we must make it clear that, in the negotiations envisaged in the Lisbon agreement, we will maintain our commitment to honour the wishes of the Gibraltarians.

If the Spanish restrictions are not fully lifted, the problem could get more difficult. With the obstacles we would have to place in the way of Spain's integration into NATO, and the longer term prospect of vetoing Spain's application to join the EC, we would be likely to come under strong pressure from our allies to make concessions to accommodate Spanish wishes. Partial opening of the frontier makes this prospect more likely. Our allies will see Spain as having made concessions and ask why we cannot do the same. We must nonetheless maintain the position that restrictions must be fully lifted before we implement our part of the undertakings agreed at Lisbon.

Against this background, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary believes that we should embark upon a quiet process of making the new Spanish Government understand the realities of the Lisbon agreement. They must be brought to realise that, while they are not being required to give up their claim to sovereignty, there can be no constitutional change in this respect for a long time, and then only if they have themselves so acted as to make the Gibraltarians want it. At the same time we should continue to affirm our commitment to the Lisbon agreement

(a point

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(a point about which there is considerable doubt in Spain). The forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 9/10 December should present an opportunity for Mr Pym to meet the new Spanish Foreign Minister and to begin this process.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R B Bone'.

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Gibraltar
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FILE

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 December, 1982

SPAIN/GIBRALTAR

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 7 December, containing the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on how we should deal with the Gibraltar question during the next few weeks.

The Prime Minister is content that Mr Pym should be guided by the contents of this letter during the meeting which he is likely to have with the Spanish Foreign Minister at NATO on 9/10 December.

A. J. COLES

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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