

Gibraltar

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UNCLASSIFIED
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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 676 OF 15 DECEMBER
INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO WASHINGTON GIBRALTAR RABAT

NATO/GIBRALTAR/CEUTA AND MELILLA

1. REPORTS OF A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH GONZALEZ GAVE TO US PRESS CORRESPONDENTS ON 13 DECEMBER ARE FILTERING BACK TO MADRID. WE HAVE JUST OBTAINED A TAPE-RECORDING OF THE INTERVIEW. THE INTERVIEW WAS A CURTAIN RAISER FOR SCHULTZ'S VISIT TO MADRID.

2. GONZALEZ REPEATED THAT THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN INSUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF SPAIN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS IN DECIDING TO JOIN NATO. HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD RE-EXAMINE THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM. IT WOULD OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH ITS NATO PARTNERS WHO WERE SPAIN'S TRADITIONAL FRIENDS. ASKED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT HIS DEFINITION OF THE NATIONAL INTERESTS HE STRESSED THAT "THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES HAVE THE DUTY TO DEFEND SPAIN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THERE COULD BE NO SUBORDINATION TO ANY FOREIGN COMMANDER: THE POSITION OVER GIBRALTAR WAS ESPECIALLY PAINFUL. IT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ARMED FORCES TO BE SUBORDINATE IN THIS AREA TO ANOTHER POWER WHICH IN OUR OPINION AND IN THAT OF THE UN, ARE OCCUPYING PART OF OUR TERRITORY." IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR SPAIN TO EXERCISE FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE AXIS RUNNING FROM THE BALEARICS THROUGH THE STRAITS TO THE CANARIES. HE WAS AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE HISTORIC NATURE OF THE GIBRALTAR PROBLEM BUT SPAIN HAD AN IRREVOCABLE RIGHT TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THIS AXIS.

2. GONZALEZ WENT ON TO SAY: "CEUTA AND MELILLA INVOLVE A QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WHICH WE HAVE THE DUTY TO DEFEND. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO US LOGICAL THAT THEY SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE AREA DEFENDED BY NATO."

3. HE WAS THEN ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER IN THE EVENT THAT THERE WAS PROGRESS TOWARDS A SOLUTION OF THE GIBRALTAR PROBLEM, OVER THE COMMAND AREA OF THE BALEARICS/STRAITS/CANARIES AXIS AND THE ISSUE OF CEUTA AND MELILLA AS WELL, HE WOULD CHANGE

THIS POSITION

HIS POSITION ON NATO. HE REPLIED THAT IN THAT EVENT HIS GOVERNMENT
COULD TAKE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE WHICH COULD BE PUT TO THE
SPANISH PEOPLE. IT WAS A QUESTION OF NATIONAL DIGNITY. THE PEOPLE
OF SPAIN HAD THE RIGHT TO AN EXPLANATION OF THE FULL POSITION.

4. GOMERSALL'S TELELETTER OF 14 DECEMBER WHICH WE HAVE JUST
RECEIVED SHOULD BE READ IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE.

PARSONS

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