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PS/10. DOWNING STREET.

FM UKDEL NATO 261445Z APR 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 114 OF 26 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (DS12 AND DS 5) MADRID PRIORITY GOVERNOR
GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL)

YOUR TELNO 136: SPAIN AND GIBRALTAR

1. THE SPANISH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE DULY MADE HIS PROTEST AT TODAY'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE LUNCH. HE SAID THAT SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION WAS EXERCISED ABOUT THE VISIT OF THE NATO FLEET PLANNED DURING LOCKED GATE. COMING AS IT DID AFTER THE VISIT OF THE BRITISH FLEET WHICH SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION HAD SEEN AS A SHOW OF STRENGTH, THIS VISIT WAS BEING TAKEN BY SPANIARDS AS A SIGN THAT NATO STATES WERE TAKING SIDES IN THE DISPUTE BETWEEN SPAIN AND BRITAIN. THIS COULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH NATO AND FOR THE PROSPECTS OF SPANISH INTEGRATION INTO THE MILITARY STRUCTURE. EXERCISE LOCKED GATE HAD ONLY RECENTLY COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE AWARE (HOW) THAT IT WAS AN ANNUAL EVENT. HE HAD TOLD THEM THAT IT WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A SHOW OF STRENGTH NOR OF NATO MEMBERS TO TAKE SIDES. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RAISE THE MATTER AND TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS. HE WAS SORRY BUT HE HAD TO LET MEMBER STATES KNOW OF SPANISH SENSIBILITIES.
2. IN LUNS' ABSENCE, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL SAID THAT EXERCISE LOCKED GATE WAS A ROUTINE EXERCISE UNDER THE COMMAND OF CINCIBERLANT AND INVOLVING COMGIBMED. IT WOULD INCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CUSTOMARY LEVEL, NAMELY 24 SURFACE WARSHIPS AND 5 SUBMARINES, DRAWN FROM A NUMBER OF NATO STATES INCLUDING THE US, THE NETHERLANDS, PORTUGAL AND THE UK, AS WELL AS MARITIME AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS. AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE VISIT OF NATO WARSHIPS TO GIBRALTAR WOULD HAVE NO BEARING ON THE POSITIONS OF BRITAIN AND SPAIN ON THE MATTER OF GIBRALTAR.
3. OJEDA (SPAIN) THANKED DA RIN AND ASKED IF THE NATO SPOKESMAN COULD BE INSTRUCTED TO QUOTE DA RIN'S REPLY IF A SPANISH JOURNALIST WERE TO ASK HIM.
4. DA RIN SAID THAT HE SAW NO OBJECTION TO THIS BUT AT MY PROMPTING ADDED THAT THE SPOKESMAN WOULD PREFACE IT BY SAYING (WHAT DA RIN HAD OMITTED FROM HIS REPLY) THAT THE DISPUTE BETWEEN SPAIN AND BRITAIN WAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ALLIANCE. THIS WAS AGREED.

GRAHAM

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