

Gibraltar
Policy

cc R J
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MO 5/16

Prime Minister

To note.

I entirely agree
and am very happy A.S.C. 9/5.
with this decision
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PRIME MINISTER

You will recall that our forces on Gibraltar were reinforced temporarily last autumn to cover the period of tension around the Spanish general election. When you were briefed in December on our arrangements for defending the Rock you were told that for planning purposes we were assuming that all the temporary reinforcements would remain until 1st June, but that this would be reviewed regularly. I wrote to you on 11th March explaining that the UK-based BLOWPIPE troop was leaving the Rock because the Gibraltar Regiment had been provided with BLOWPIPE and trained to use it.

2. I have now been considering whether it would be right to withdraw the other temporary enhancements. They comprise 2 Jaguar aircraft, a Royal Navy Lynx helicopter, small contingents of RAF police and Naval personnel and the stationing of the Guardship on reduced notice. Certain intelligence units among the temporary reinforcements have already been established on the Rock.

3. Whilst the most recent JIC assessment judges that the Spanish threat to Gibraltar - always remote - has if anything diminished, I have concluded that in view of the present strained Anglo-Spanish relations over Gibraltar, including Spain's intemperate reaction to Exercises Springtrain and Locked Gate and a series of minor infringements of Gibraltar's waters, we should not at present withdraw any of our forces from the Rock. In reaching this decision I have also noted

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the Governor of Gibraltar's views that a withdrawal could be viewed by the Spanish as a sign of weakness and by the Gibraltarians as indicating lack of will or lack of sympathy. I intend to review the situation again in three months.

Copies of this minute go to other members of OD(EM) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "W. St. J. ...", is written above the typed text.

Ministry of Defence

5th May 1983

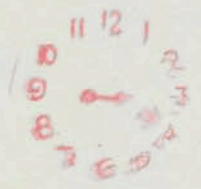
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SECRET



COMPTROLLER

9 MAY 1985



SECRET

R M



FILE

OD(EM): HO
Chancellor
FCO
CDL

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 May, 1983

GIBRALTAR

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 5 May recording his conclusion that, in view of the present strained Anglo/Spanish relations over Gibraltar, we should not at present withdraw any of our forces from the Rock.

The Prime Minister has commented that she entirely agrees and is pleased with this decision.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the other members of OD(EM) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

R. Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

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