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DESKBY FCO 181300Z

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FM MADRID 180932Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 203 OF 18 APRIL

AND TO IMMEDIATE LISBON

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON BONN UKDEL NATO GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR

(PERSONAL) UKDEL STRASBOURG

P.S. 10. DOWNING ST.

*MS*

Prime Minister

*Eq. nos. 4, 5 & 6.*

*MS*

*A.J.C. 19/4.*

ANGLO-SPANISH RELATIONS

THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO CALL AT HIS FLAT AT SHORT NOTICE ON THE EVENING OF SATURDAY, 17 APRIL. HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM THE KING'S STATE VISIT TO NORWAY.

2. PEREZ-LLORCA SAID THAT THE SPANISH PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ATHENS EARLIER IN THE WEEK, WHICH HE HAD ALSO ATTENDED, HAD GONE WELL. RATIFICATION OF SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO WOULD NOT (NOT) BE IMPEDED BY THE GREEKS. CALVO SOTELO CERTAINLY HOPED TO ATTEND THE JUNE MEETING OF NATO AND HE HIMSELF STILL HOPED TO BE PRESENT AT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING NEXT MONTH. THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT SHOULD PRESENT NO (NO) PROBLEM. BUT NOW A NEW SNAG HAD ARISEN IN LISBON. THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE ACTION HAD BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE PORTUGUESE ASSEMBLY WHERE IT WAS NOW WITH THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE. THE SOCIALISTS THERE WERE ARGUING THAT PORTUGAL SHOULD SEEK ASSURANCES ABOUT THE NEW COMMAND STRUCTURE AND PORTUGAL'S OWN POSITION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE BEFORE RATIFYING THE PROTOCOL. THIS HAD STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD WITHIN THE RULING COALITION WHOSE CAUCUS WAS APPARENTLY MEETING THIS MONDAY. SUCH PRE-CONDITIONS WOULD SET A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT AND WERE NOT REASONABLE, GIVEN THE ASSURANCES WHICH SPAIN HAD ALREADY CONVEYED TO PORTUGAL BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO HELP, PEREZ-LLORCA HAD CANCELLED HIS OWN VISIT TO PORTUGAL DUE FOR APRIL 21 AND 22, WHEN THE FINAL VOTE IN THE PORTUGUESE PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN.

3. PEREZ-LLORCA SAID HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING OUR AMBASSADOR IN LISBON COULD DO URGENTLY TO STIFFEN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLUTION TO GET THE PROTOCOL RATIFIED WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF HE WOULD WORK WITH HIS AMERICAN AND GERMAN COLLEAGUES, WHO WERE ALSO IN THE PICTURE AS SPAIN'S OTHER BEST ALLIES. I UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY AN IMMEDIATE MESSAGE.

4. PEREZ-LLORCA ADDED THAT HE WELCOMED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN TOUCH WITH ME AGAIN. (OWING TO HIS ABSENCE IN ATHENS AND OSLO, I HAD NOT SEEN HIM SINCE THE SPANISH ABSTENTION ON OUR SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OVER THE FALKLANDS). HE SAID RUEFULLY THAT HE DID NOT HAVE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE ABOUT THAT DECISION. (I FORMED THE CONCLUSION THAT THE OPPOSITE WAS IN FACT THE CASE). /THE

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