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P.S. TO NO. 10. DOWNING ST.  
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FM MADRID 171521Z MAY 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 279 OF 17 MAY

INFO PRIORITY GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR(PERSONAL) UKMIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 275(NOT TO ALL): FALKLANDS AND GIBRALTAR

YOU WILL HAVE NOTED A SHARP CONTRAST BETWEEN THE RELATIVELY CONSTRUCTIVE LINE TAKEN WITH ME IN PRIVATE BY THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE MUCH LESS HELPFUL ATTITUDES ADOPTED IN PUBLIC BY HIS PRIME MINISTER (MY TELNO 276) AND REPRESENTATIVES AT THE UNITED NATIONS (UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 754). EVEN ALLOWING FOR THE USUAL HABIT HERE OF BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN, THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT PEREZ-LLORCA REPRESENTS THE BEST POINT OF CONTACT WE HAVE WITH THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. HIS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE EVENTS CONSTRUCTIVELY NEEDS TO BE BOLSTERED.

2. IN OUR TALK ON 15 MAY HE ADMITTED PERSONAL SYMPATHY FOR OUR RESISTANCE TO THE ARGENTINE INVASION. IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR SPAIN IF MILITARY AGGRESSION WERE SEEN TO SUCCEED. I ASKED WHETHER HE REFERRED TO SPANISH TERRITORIAL PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH AFRICAN ENCLAVES AND THE CANARY ISLANDS. HE SAID THAT A FAR MORE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION WAS INTERNAL. THOSE WHO DEFENDED ARGENTINA'S MILITARY ACTION AGAINST A "COLONIAL REGIME" INCLUDED THE SUPPORTERS OF SPAIN'S MILITARY CONSPIRATORS AGAINST DEMOCRACY. BUT SUCH CONCEPTUAL THINKING WAS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE.
3. THE MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR OUR POSITION ABOUT TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE OPINION OF THE POPULATION IN THE FALKLANDS. THERE WAS NO DIRECT PARALLEL WITH GIBRALTAR, WHERE SELF-DETERMINATION WAS RULED OUT BY THE TREATY OF UTRECHT. HE DID NOT WISH TO QUARREL WITH US ABOUT THE FINE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "WISHES" AND "INTERESTS". BUT WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID GIVING PERPETUAL VETO RIGHTS. THE PREAMBLE TO THE GIBRALTAR CONSTITUTION HAD BEEN ARTFULLY DRAFTED IN THIS RESPECT.
4. I POINTED OUT THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IN AN EVEN WORSE MESS IF NEGOTIATIONS TO SOLVE ALL OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS OVER GIBRALTAR HAD NOT BEEN SCHEDULED TO START ON 25 JUNE. HE AGREED, WHILE EXPRESSING A PESSIMISTIC VIEW ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO CONCEDE TO HIM AT SINTRA. (SUCH PESSIMISM IS NO BAD THING. BUT WE MUST NOT ALLOW IT TO REACH A LEVEL WHERE PEREZ-LLORCA IS UNABLE TO CARRY HIS GOVERNMENT WITH HIM IN IMPLEMENTING THE LISBON AGREEMENT ON 25 JUNE).

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5. THE GOVERNMENT HERE ARE STILL NERVOUS ABOUT THE RIGHT WING THREAT AGAINST THEM, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT MILITARY TRIALS AND THE ANDALUSIAN ELECTIONS ON 23 MAY. HENCE THEIR PUBLIC FEEBLENESS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES I RECOMMEND THAT, WHEN THE CRUNCH COMES ON THE FALKLANDS, I SHOULD BE AUTHORISED TO GIVE PEREZ-LLORCA AN URGENT ACCOUNT OF OUR FINAL DECISION. I WOULD EMPHASISE OUR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE UNHELPFUL ROLE OF DE PINIES AND URGE PEREZ-LLORCA PERSONALLY TO ENSURE A MORE POSITIVE SPANISH POSITION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

6. AT THE SAME TIME IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO TELL PEREZ-LLORCA THAT YOU ACCEPT THE NEED TO SHOW PUBLICLY THAT THE SPANISH COURSE OF PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF DISPUTES OFFERS GREATER PROSPECT OF EVENTUAL SUCCESS THAN THE ARGENTINE METHOD OF USING FORCE. YOU MAY HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE HIM AT DINNER IN BRUSSELS ON 24 MAY.

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