

GIBRALTAR/SPAIN

TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

It has been agreed between the British and Spanish Governments that the arrangements for negotiations to start between the two sides about Gibraltar on 20 April, at the same time as the re-establishment of direct communications, should be postponed. Both Governments remain committed, as in the Lisbon statement, to starting negotiations aimed at overcoming all the differences between the two sides over Gibraltar, to reopening direct communications and to developing closer understanding between those directly concerned in the area. It has been agreed between the two sides that the negotiations due to take place at Sintra and all ~~the other arrangements~~ ^{commitments} for that date, such as the re-opening of direct communications, will be rescheduled for 25 June.

LINE TO TAKE:

NEGOTIATIONS ON GIBRALTAR

The decision to postpone the talks and lifting of restrictions was by mutual agreement in the light of the present circumstances.

The Lisbon Statement of April 1980 provided for the restoration of direct communications between Spain and Gibraltar, (ie, opening of the border) and for negotiations to start between Spain and Britain aimed at overcoming all the differences between us on Gibraltar. Opening the border, after 13 years of closure, will bring major long-term benefits to the people of Gibraltar. In the negotiations the Spaniards are free to raise any question, including their long standing claim to the territory.

Our own position is clear. Our assurances to the people of Gibraltar are spelled out in the 1969 Gibraltar Constitution. They were repeated in the Lisbon Statement in these words: "The British Government will fully maintain its commitment to honour the freely and democratically expressed views of the people of Gibraltar set out in the preamble to the Gibraltar Constitution".

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We remain firmly committed to the procedure for removal of restrictions coupled with negotiations envisaged in the Lisbon Statement. So does the Spanish Government.

SPAIN/FALKLAND ISLANDS

While the Spanish Government have long supported Argentina's claim and we regret that they did not support the Security Council resolution on the Falkland Islands, it is important to note that in an official announcement on 2 April, they also pointed out that they 'have consistently and repeatedly maintained....their opposition to the use of force to resolve disputes between countries.....'. They themselves see a fundamental difference between the way the Argentinians have approached their claim to the Falklands and their own attitude to Gibraltar. So do we.