



UK EYES A

Prime Minister

To note.

Ref. A09813

MR COLES

The 2 for Gibraltar in new doc. We may need to act very quickly if we have info.

A.S.C. 22/10

Spain/Gibraltar

You asked in your minute of 18 October for comments on the question raised by the Prime Minister, of whether the Spanish Government could be expected to act "resolutely" if it were to discover plotting within the Spanish armed forces against Gibraltar.

2. The JIC's conclusions on this point in JIC(82)(WSI) 41 were related to the period between now and the Spanish General Election on 28 October. Within that period the JIC believes that the Spanish Government could be expected to act with resolution.

3. The Government's move against the small number of officers arrested on 1 October does not appear to have given rise to hostile reactions within the armed forces. There is evidence that the Spanish security authorities had had knowledge of this plotting for some time, and the Government chose to take action at an early stage before it developed. The Government are clearly aware of the political need at the present time to show that they are prepared to uphold the Constitution and resist any encroachment on their powers by the armed forces. Any plot against Gibraltar would be a challenge to the Government's authority; but it would be likely to be on a much smaller scale than any plot to overthrow the Government, and at a relatively junior level, and firm action would accordingly be likely to produce a successful demonstration of Government authority.

4. For these reasons the JIC believes that the Spanish Government can be expected to act with resolution should any plotting directed against Gibraltar be discovered between now and 28 October. The question of the resolution of whatever Government comes to power after 28 October must await the result of the General Election, and the JIC will be looking at the threat to Gibraltar once again when the result of the Election is known.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to Mr Fall (FCO) and Mr Mottram (MOD).

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21 October 1982

File

88

20 October 1982

GIBRALTAR

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 18 October.

A. J. COLES

Miss J. E. Ridley,
Ministry of Defence.

GR



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~23007822~~ 218 2111/

MO 5/16

18th October 1982

Prime Minister

To note.

MF

MR 11/16

Dear John,

GIBRALTAR

You will no doubt have seen weekend press reports of the decision to postpone the return to the UK of 1 Staffords, the resident battalion. I thought it might be helpful to let you have a note on the background to this decision, updating Richard Mottram's letter to you of 7th October which described a number of steps being taken to improve the security of the Rock.

In his letter Mr Mottram referred to the temporary deployment of a BLOWPIPE unit to cover the period of the Spanish elections (15th October - 20th November) and to the fact that the planned replacement of the resident battalion would be kept under close review and cancelled if the situation deteriorated. Following the report in Madrid telegram No 515 (attached) about the movement of Gen Milans de Bosch to Algerciras, further consideration was given to the Staffords' deployment, and although there has been no change in the overall threat assessment, the Secretary of State judged it prudent to postpone the resident Battalion's return to the UK for training. He also agreed that the notice of the two Companies and Attack Headquarters earmarked for the first stage of reinforcement of Gibraltar should be reduced from 7 days to 72 hours for the period from 22nd October to 6th November.

There could well be further media interest in all this as the Spanish election approaches and if further information reaches the press - as it is likely to - regarding the further security measures described in the earlier letter and the decision to reduce the reinforcement units' notice period. As regards the naval and air deployments, it should be relatively easy to maintain the line that these activities, like the BLOWPIPE deployment are in the nature of normal training. On the reduction in notice, it will be necessary to stick to the line that the MOD does not normally comment on such operational matters. This is not likely to satisfy

A J Coles Esq



the press but of course would do less harm to UK/Spanish relations than an admission that these measures relate to a potential threat from Spain.

Yours,

Jane Ridley
(J E RIDLEY) (MISS)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

CWRØ21 Ø7/1917 28ØC4451

FOR CWR

IMMEDIATE/IMMEDIATE Ø71556Z OCT 8

FROM COMMCEN FCO LONDON
TO MODUK
INFO ACTING GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L U K C O M M S O N L Y

SIC A3A (SIC INSERTED BY DCC NOT TO BE USED IN REPLY)
CONFIDENTIAL UK COMMS ONLY
FM MADRID Ø71556Z OCT 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 515 OF 7 OCTOBER
AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK
INFO IMMEDIATE ACTING GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL)

MY TELNO 512: MILITARY PLOT/TROOPMOVEMENTS

1. THE SPANISH PRESS ON 7 OCTOBER REPORTS THE TRANSFER OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL MILANS DEL BOSCH AND OTHER LEADING FIGURES OF THE 23 FEBRUARY 1981 ATTEMPTED COUP FROM THEIR PRISON JUST OUTSIDE MADRID TO MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS AT WIDELY SPREAD POINTS ALONG THE SPANISH COAST. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, MILANS DEL BOSCH IS NOW HELD IN A MILITARY RESIDENTIAL AREA (LA HUERTA DEL GENERAL) IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF ALGECIRAS UNTIL SUITABLE QUARTERS CAN BE PREPARED FOR HIM IN THE MILITARY FORTRESS OF TARIFA, LOCALLY KNOWN AS THE ISLA DO LAS PALOMAS, FURTHER ALONG THE SOUTH COAST. THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR HAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT MILANS WAS THE MOVING SPIRIT BEHIND THE LATEST COUP ATTEMPT.
2. THE PRESS HAS ALSO REPORTED SOME UNUSUAL MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE CAMPO REGION ASSOCIATED WITH MILANS DEL BOSCH'S PRESENCE, SAYING THAT CERTAIN UNITS HAD BEEN PUT ON A STATE OF ALERT AND CONFINED TO BARRACKS ON 6 OCTOBER. OUR CONSUL IN ALGECIRAS HAS INVESTIGATED AND SAYS THE REPORTS ARE INACCURATE BUT HE CONFIRMS THAT MILANS DEL BOSCH IS THERE.
3. THE PRESENCE OF MILANS DEL BOSCH IN THE CAMPO AREA IS AN ADDED COMPLICATION IN RESPECT OF GIBRALTAR. IT COULD MAKE THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF UNTOWARD TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE CAMPO THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. EQUALLY HE HIMSELF COULD BECOME A CENTRE FOR DISAFFECTION. BUT THIS MOVE HAS PRESUMABLY BEEN DECIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT ON INTERNAL SECURITY GROUNDS AND A WISH TO HAVE HIM AS FAR AWAY FROM MADRID AS POSSIBLE, JUST AS TEJERO HAS BEEN SENT TO EL FERROL ON SPAIN'S NORTH WEST COAST.

PARSONS
BT



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10
1982

19 OCT 1982

file B.
21



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SPAIN/GIBRALTAR

The Prime Minister read over the weekend the section of JIC(82)(WS1)41 which deals with the above subject.

With regard to the last sentence of the first paragraph, the Prime Minister has questioned whether we can really expect the Spanish Government to act "resolutely" should a plot against Gibraltar be discovered. The same point arises with the second sentence of the second paragraph.

B/F

I should be grateful for your comments.

I am copying this minute to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

18 October 1982