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DESKBY 061330Z  
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FM MADRID 061230Z APRIL 82  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 185 OF 6 APRIL  
INFO IMMEDIATE GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL)  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

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MY TELEGRAM NO 176: GIBRALTAR AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO CALL TODAY. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT REMAINED READY TO IMPLEMENT THE LISBON AGREEMENT IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. PRACTICAL WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE OPENING OF THE FRONTIER HAD BEEN CONTINUING. NEVERTHELESS HE NOW DOUBTED WHETHER IT WAS FEASIBLE TO GO AHEAD ON APRIL 20 AS PLANNED. THIS DATE COULD COINCIDE WITH A MAJOR CONFRONTATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. THAT COULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO ATTEND IN SINTRA IN PERSON. MOREOVER, IN THE PRESENT STATE OF BOTH BRITISH AND SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT PERSONALLY FOR YOU AND FOR HIM TO AGREE ON AN OUTCOME AT SINTRA ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES, SHOWING THAT NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE STATUS OF GIBRALTAR HAD BEGUN IN EARNEST. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM ME, PEREZ-LLORCA ALSO ADMITTED THAT HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE DANGER OF PROVOCATIVE ACTION BY SPANIARDS OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT CONTROL WHO MIGHT CAUSE TROUBLE IN GIBRALTAR AFTER THE FRONTIER OPENING.

2. PEREZ-LLORCA ADDED THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO CONCERT PUBLIC PRESENTATION WITH YOU QUICKLY WHICH WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WERE CONTINUING TO WORK ACTIVELY TO PRESERVE THE LISBON PROCESS. HE WOULD WELCOME YOUR URGENT VIEWS ON HOW THE MATTER SHOULD BE HANDLED IN VIEW OF INTENSE PRESS SPECULATION HERE. WOULD YOU WISH SIMPLY TO SAY THAT THE NEW TURN OF EVENTS PREVENTED YOU FROM COMMITTING YOURSELF TO ATTEND AT SINTRA ON APRIL 20? I UNDERTOOK TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. SPEAKING ENTIRELY PERSONALLY, I SAID I THOUGHT WE SHOULD AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH EITHER SPAIN APPEARED TO BE REFUSING TO OPEN THE FRONTIER OR BRITAIN APPEARED TO BE REFUSING TO START NEGOTIATIONS. IT MIGHT BE BEST TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE POSTPONEMENT CAME AS A RESULT OF MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. PEREZ-LLORCA SAID THAT HE FULLY AGREED WITH THIS, IF IT WERE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU.

3. WE THEN DISCUSSED HOW BEST TO PROVE TO PUBLIC OPINION THAT THE LISBON PROCESS WAS STILL ALIVE. PEREZ-LLORCA SAID THAT ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD SIMPLY BE TO SAY THAT A NEW DATE FOR BEGINNING THE NEGOTIATIONS AND OPENING THE FRONTIER WOULD SHORTLY BE ANNOUNCED. ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU PREFERRED, THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE A NEW DATE STRAIGHT

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AWAY. HIS OWN PERSONAL PREFERENCE IN THAT EVENT WOULD BE TO ANNOUNCE A DISTANT DATE SUCH AS SEPTEMBER. BUT HE KNEW THAT THIS WOULD BE BAD FOR THE SUMMER TRADE WITH GIBRALTAR AND FOR OPINION THERE. HE HAD SECURED HIS PRIME MINISTER'S AGREEMENT THAT MORNING TO ANNOUNCING A DATE AT THE END OF JUNE, IF YOU PREFERRED THAT. I UNDERTOOK TO SEEK YOUR VIEWS ON THIS POINT ALSO.

4. WE WENT ON TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. PEREZ LLORCA SAID THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN UNDER STRONG PRESSURE TO SUPPORT ARGENTINA BECAUSE OF THE HISPANIC "COMMONWEALTH" AND BECAUSE OF THE ADMITTEDLY MISLEADING PARALLEL WITH GIBRALTAR. BUT THEY WERE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR CLOSE LINKS WITH US AS A DEMOCRATIC WESTERN NATION AND FUTURE ALLY AND PARTNER. THEY WOULD CONTINUE THEIR LINE OF REJECTING THE USE OF FORCE (MY TELEGRAM NO 171) AND RECOGNISED THAT ARGENTINA HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO DO SO. I EXPRESSED THE STRONG HOPE THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD USE WHATEVER INFLUENCE THEY HAD IN THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES THROUGH THEIR OBSERVER STATUS AND CONTACTS WITH THE US GOVERNMENT TO PRESS THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO OBEY THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. PEREZ LLORCA SAID THAT THEY WOULD DO THEIR BEST AND WERE ALWAYS WILLING TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH US. THEIR LATEST IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE ARGENTINES WERE NOW DISAPPOINTED WITH THE DEGREE OF REAL SUPPORT THEY WERE LIKELY TO GET FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE OAS.

5. PLEASE SEE MY I F T (NOT TO WASHINGTON).

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ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
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FALKLAND ISLANDS