

Irma Skidell

A.S.C. 32

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PP MADRID

GRS 317

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FM FCO 010909Z FEB 84

TO PRIORITY MADRID

TELEGRAM NUMBER 26 OF 1 FEBRUARY

INFO PRIORITY GOVERNOR GIBRALTAR (PERSONAL)

YOUR TELEGRAM NO 34 AND GIBRALTAR TELEGRAM NO PERSONAL 03:

VISIT OF HMS INVINCIBLE TO GIBRALTAR

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADVERSE REACTION IN SPAIN TO A VISIT BY HMS INVINCIBLE TO GIBRALTAR AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR DEALINGS WITH THE SPANIARDS OVER GIBRALTAR, FOR RAPIER, AND FOR THE PATTERN OF FUTURE SHIPS' VISITS TO BOTH SPAIN AND GIBRALTAR.

2. IN GENERAL WE ARE VERY RELUCTANT TO PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON OUR MILITARY USE OF GIBRALTAR FOR POLITICAL REASONS ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE EXCEPTIONAL OCCASIONS WHEN THIS IS NECESSARY IN THIS CASE, PARTLY BECAUSE OF COMPLICATIONS AFFECTING OTHER PARTS OF HMS INVINCIBLE'S DEPLOYMENT, MOD ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PROCEEDING WITH THIS PART OF THE PROGRAMME. FURTHERMORE, WE DO NOT WISH THE SPANIARDS TO GAIN THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY HAVE A RIGHT OF REGARD OVER OUR USE OF GIBRALTAR. A DECISION TO ALTER HMS INVINCIBLE'S PLAN WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAK AND MIGHT BE ATTRIBUTED BY THE SPANIARDS TO THEIR REPRESENTATIONS TO YOU LAST MONTH (YOUR TELELETTER OF 20 DECEMBER AND WILSON'S OF 22 DECEMBER TO YOU).

3. WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR HMS INVINCIBLE TO CALL AT GIBRALTAR ON 12-14 APRIL SHOULD GO AHEAD AS PLANNED. WE ARE CONSCIOUS THAT THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE VISIT WILL NEED TO BE HANDLED WITH GREAT CARE AND ARE IN TOUCH WITH MOD ABOUT THIS. AS WITH HMS INVINCIBLE'S VISIT LAST SEPTEMBER, WE INTEND TO INFORM THE SPANIARDS, AT A LOW LEVEL, A FEW WEEKS BEFOREHAND. THIS WOULD BE AFTER MY MEETING WITH MORAN ON 20-21 FEBRUARY. MEANWHILE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PREMATURE LEAKS. WITH THE PASSAGE OF

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TIME SINCE THE AUSTRALIA ROW WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE SPANISH RE-
ACTION WILL BE AS LIMITED AS LAST TIME, BUT CLEARLY THERE CAN
BE NO GUARANTEE OF THIS.

HOWE

GIBRALTAR

LIMITED
SED
DEF D
NEWS D
PUSD
ECD(E)
PLANNING STAFF
MAED
PS

PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR WHITNEY
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
MR WRIGHT
SIR C TICKELL
MR CARTLEDGE
MR HANNAY
MR JENKINS

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
GIBRALTAR

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