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Sir Antony Acland, KCVO, CMG

BRITISH EMBASSY.
MADRID.Excmo Sr Don
Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

13 October 1978

My dear Minister,

I have been asked by the British Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen, to deliver to you the personal message which ... is attached. The signed original will be available next week.

With my respects and warm personal regards -

Yours sincerely,

Antony Acland

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TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY,
DR DAVID OWEN, TO EXCMO SR DON MARCELINO OREJA AGUIRRE



"Dear Señor Oreja,

I was sorry that our timings in New York did not coincide and that it is some time now since we have been able to have a talk. The initial meeting of the Working Groups in July went well but it is important, in my judgement, that we should not let the impetus which we put behind the 'Strasbourg Process' peter out and I believe that it would be conducive to a positive atmosphere for a substantive meeting between us if by then the Working Groups had been able to show a useful measure of practical progress. I was not quite sure how to interpret your remarks about Gibraltar at New York (you will have observed that we carefully avoided either commenting or exercising the right to reply), but I hope that they do not indicate any change in your approach to the strategy which we had agreed.

2. So far as the work of the Groups is concerned, on our side we are awaiting the information about pensions which your officials promised at the meeting in July. And we have not so far had any comment from you about the paper on maritime communications. However I am glad to say that there has been some forward movement over telecommunications which should prove useful. This is a field where, as your people will no doubt know, the Gibraltar authorities have a firm contract with Cable and Wireless, with whom they have been discussing the modernisation and improvement of the facilities for international telecommunications in Gibraltar by the installation of an earth satellite terminal. Agreement has just been reached on future arrangements which will permit the routing of a significant element of the telecommunications traffic, ie that to Spain and countries of Western Europe, through the Spanish telephone network. This means that the practical arrangements for further collaboration with Spain, in response to the Spanish offer, can therefore be discussed at the next Working Group meeting.

3. I hope that you will agree that a further meeting of the Working Groups should be held without delay, as part of the process of creating the confidence on which we can then build. We might then consider the timing for our own meeting. I do not exclude, since I know that we both share the political will to move forward, the possibility of a break-through, though it is not easy for either of us to find a way through, which will take account of the various pressures which make a solution so difficult. This is why it is so important to maintain the right atmosphere.

Yours ever,

David Owen "

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