

Kingdom has an obligation to support the Gibraltarians. The Foreign Office can on certain matters direct them, and on certain matters advise them, but at the end of the day it is the British Government that has to defend them. The British Government is the guardian of the Gibraltarians and the Foreign Office must not give way because the Spanish Government says that it is unhappy with certain decisions.

I appreciate that what Reddaway wrote was the truth as it reflects how officials advise ministers. The Minister would be told that here is a balance and the political fact is that we cannot afford to offend Spain over Gibraltar because she is an important member of the EU and a NATO ally.

I regret that the Minister herself did not sign the letter as, apart from other considerations, she has shown disrespect to a distinguished former governor. I hope to obtain a clarification on the contents of the letter, signed by mandarin Reddaway, under the Minister's own name and signature.

(Part II in your Thursday Chronicle)