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CONFERENCE ON Security and  
Co-operation in the  
Mediterranean

EUROPEAN  
POLICY

October 1990

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
PREM		19/2978					



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

19 October 1990

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Thank you for your letter of 17 October proposing the line we should take on the Italian proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean. It is so tactful and oblique that I am not sure the Italians will realise we are against their proposals. I don't think the prime Minister intends to leave them in any doubt on this score.

CHARLES POWELL

Richard Gozney, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

file  
DA  
by PC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 October 1990

*Dear Charles,*

Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean:  
Prime Minister's Meeting with Mr Andreotti

Thank you for your letter of 9 October, in which you record the Prime Minister's view that the Italian/Spanish proposals on a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) need vigorous opposition. We have been thinking further about what would best serve British interests in response to the CSCM initiative. Apart from the likelihood of the subject being raised by the Italian Foreign Minister, if not also by President Cossiga, during the State Visit next week, we need to suggest what the Prime Minister might say should the subject be raised by Signor Andreotti on 20 October.

We believe we should agree with the Italians that the Mediterranean region requires attention. The gap between the prosperity and stability of the European member countries and the poverty and instability of the North African and Near Eastern Mediterranean countries has all too obvious potential for creating tension and worse. But the contrasts between the Mediterranean states are much too great for their common problems to be soluable within a single forum, such as the CSCM.

We suggest that Ministers and officials, and if necessary the Prime Minister with Signor Andreotti, should take the following line:

- Italy and Spain are right to focus on the Mediterranean as a region which needs long term attention;
- We support regional cooperation tailored to suit the countries involved;
- The CSCE does not provide a model for such cooperation. The CSCM would probably need to have a very broad membership; as a result the risks of failure are very high;
- The Middle East should not be drawn in;

/- The UK



- The UK would not support initiatives outside the EC framework which involved new expenditure; trade, not aid, is what will improve the lot of the poorer Mediterranean countries. We would want to act through the EC;
- Security aspects should be confined to confidence building measures; otherwise security problems could be overriding.

If the Prime Minister is content with this revised approach, our Embassies will be instructed to lobby accordingly in EC and other capitals. The French have already indicated their unhappiness with the Italian initiative. The Germans may also have reservations. The Americans should be satisfied with the proposed line.

This advice has been agreed by Mr Garel-Jones in the Foreign Secretary's absence in the Middle East.

*Yours ever,*

*Richard Gozney*

(R H T Gozney)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

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cc PC

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

9 October 1990

**CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

Thank you for your letter of 8 October about the joint proposal by the Italian and Spanish Foreign Ministers for a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean. The Prime Minister takes the view that the proposals are potentially sufficiently damaging to our interests to make it necessary to oppose them rather more vigorously than suggested in your letter. If we just 'keep our heads down' there is a real risk that they will gather momentum and we shall be forced to have a major row about them at a high level. It would be much better to start to sabotage them at every level of collective discussion now.

**CHARLES POWELL**

R H T Gozney Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

CSCE ①

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8 October 1990

I think it better

Wiforonly to oppose on  
the lines set out in

John Charles,

June Review

It is an appalling proposal.  
I don't think "keeping our  
heads down" is good enough:  
if we don't oppose, it will

Conference on Security and Cooperation  
in the Mediterranean

At a CSCE Meeting on the Mediterranean in Spain on  
24 September the Italian and Spanish Foreign Ministers  
introduced a joint proposal for a Conference on Security  
and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM).

Italian/Spanish Proposal

The Italian/Spanish proposal is intended to  
strengthen relations between the EC and the Maghreb  
countries. The underlying objective - to shore up the  
Maghreb economies in order to reduce the flow of  
immigration into Europe (the so called "Mexico factor") -  
is serious and touches on the national interests of  
Mediterranean EC Member States including the French (and  
on our interests after 1992). But the latest proposal is  
over ambitious, covering all three of the CSCE 'baskets'  
of activity and a 'Mediterranean' which would stretch  
from Portugal to Iran.

The proposals under Basket I (security) are likely  
to concentrate on low-level confidence building measures  
such as notification of the passage of ships through  
territorial waters. These would not necessarily cause us  
difficulties, particularly if combined with action on  
terrorism. But we would need to be clear that more far  
reaching arms control was not part of the agenda. Any  
suggestion that this should be the forum for negotiation  
of the complex of Middle East security issues after the  
Gulf crisis would be quite unrealistic, and wrong.

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step through by  
default.  
We ought  
to look  
for some  
allies & now  
a well-  
argued &  
subtle  
counter-  
campaign.  
Agree! CDP  
8/x.

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N.P.

The ideas under the economic 'basket' include a commitment from EC members to the allocation of 0.25% of GNP to Mediterranean development projects from 1992, a regional financial institution and debt-reduction measures. These are for us unacceptable, as we have made clear.

The ideas for the 'human dimension' basket envisage a dialogue between Northern and Southern members, while recognising the lack of a shared culture.

The projected timetable suggests a Preparatory Committee by the end of 1991 and establishment of the CSCM itself in 1993.

Initial Responses

The French and the Portuguese also took part in the preparation of the initiative, but the French are not happy with the way the proposal has been developed. The US have not commented publicly, but are known to have serious reservations. The Soviet position is more enthusiastic but it is unlikely that the Soviet Union would seek to participate at an early stage and they know they can rely on the US to oppose. The Arab states are enthusiastic to varying degrees. Israel would be cautious; the question of PLO membership could not be avoided.

UK Interests

The Italians and Spaniards are investing political capital in the idea of a CSCM. Other states on both littorals may see the attitude of the UK as a test of commitment to the region. To reject the proposals out of hand would not serve our interests and would severely limit our ability to influence developments.

A CSCM could be a positive force for reducing tension in the region and for influencing performances over human rights and democracy.

The dangers are, however, considerable. A CSCM could offer unwelcome scope for interference, for example by the USSR and Malta, in US naval operations in

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the Mediterranean. A CSCM could cut across the work of the CSCE; and could present a new forum for old disputes and regional problems. It could complicate handling of the Gulf crisis. The financial proposals are unsound and unacceptable.

All in all we would prefer multilateral cooperation over the Mediterranean to remain within the EC framework.

Conclusions

The Foreign Secretary believes that we should keep our heads down for as long as possible. We should avoid becoming closely engaged. Even a cautious welcome might be costly and dangerous.

*Yours ever,*

*Richard Gozney*

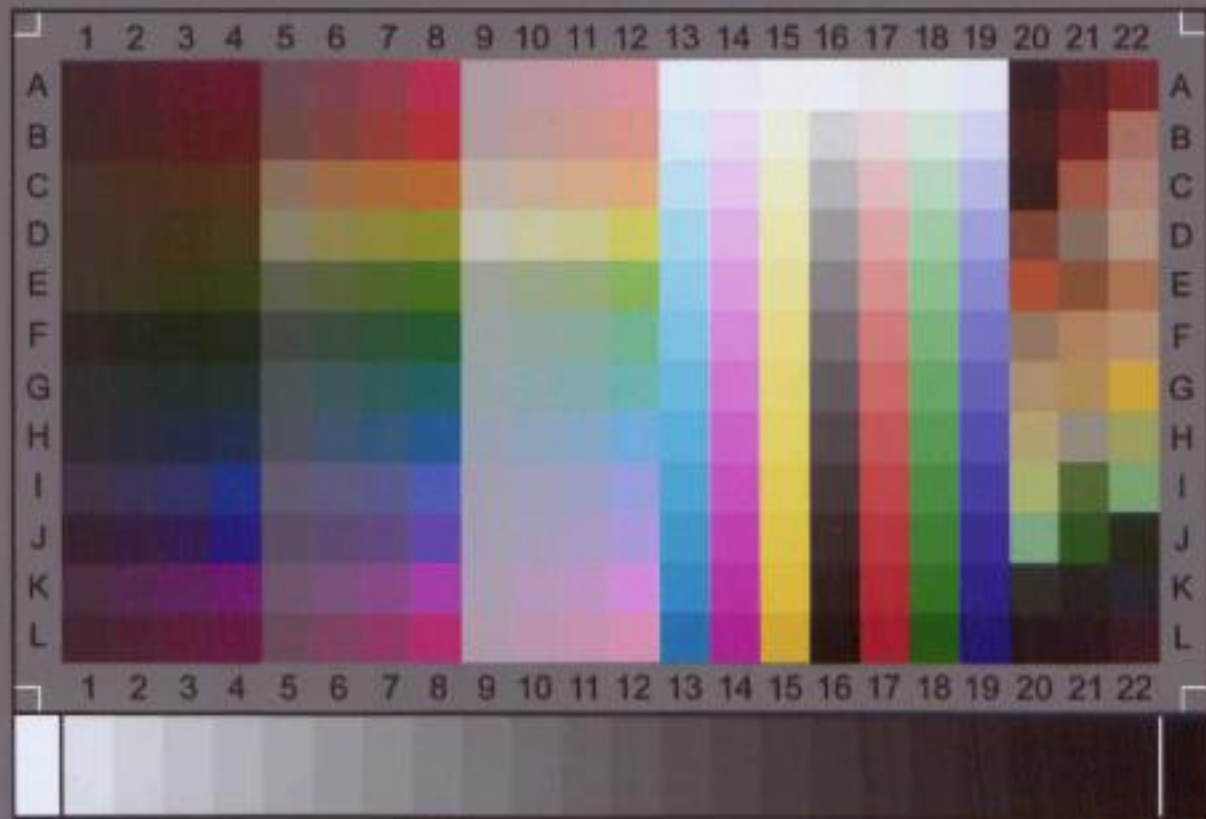
(R H T Gozney)  
Private Secretary

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