

Ch. Martin

Venezuela FH



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 June 1981

Dear Francis

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister, Dr. Zambrano Velasco, called on the Prime Minister at 0930 this morning. He was accompanied by the Venezuelan Ambassador, as well as Dr. La Riva and Dr. Borges. Mr. Ridley and Sir Reginald Secondé were also present.

The Prime Minister, in welcoming Dr. Zambrano, said that she felt that contacts between Ministers of the UK and Venezuela were very important. The UK had long-standing contacts with the Caribbean and Northern Latin America. Dr. Zambrano replied that he was honoured to meet the Prime Minister. He saw this meeting, and the call he was to make on Lord Carrington, as part of a series of meetings. These meetings, and the earlier visits of Lord Carrington and Mr. Ridley to Caracas, helped to forge relations between the UK and Venezuela, and to solve problems of joint concern.

Dr. Zambrano went on to say that Caribbean countries were at present facing considerable economic and political problems. Venezuela and other countries, notably Mexico, were pursuing positive schemes for co-operation in the area. These were designed to promote progress and development and to maintain democratic government in the countries concerned. There was a danger that Cuba, as a satellite of the USSR, would frustrate these aims. Cuba's destabilising policies in the Caribbean were demonstrated by its actions in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Venezuela was watching these developments with concern.

Dr. Zambrano reported that Cuba had aligned itself with Guyana in the dispute over the Venezuela/Guyana border, and Mr. Jackson of Guyana had recently made a joint statement with the Cuban Foreign Minister. There was a danger that the border dispute would now become an issue in Caribbean, and possibly international, politics. This would make a solution to the problem more difficult to find. The Port of Spain protocol to the Geneva Agreement of 1966 was due to expire in June 1982. The protocol had suspended the operation of the 1966 Agreement to which the UK was a party along with Venezuela and Guyana. Its expiry would lead to the re-establishment of the procedures set out in the 1966 Agreement. Venezuela proposed to work for a practical solution to the dispute, based on the Geneva Agreement.

/Dr. Zambrano

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Dr. Zambrano hoped that Guyana and the UK would be willing to work together on this basis. He had recently attended a CARICOM meeting where Guyana had put forward a motion calling on all those present to condemn the dispute. He was glad to say that the meeting had rejected the motion. He appreciated the problems Guyana faced, but he felt that Mr. Burnham was using the border dispute to divert attention from Guyana's internal problems. A settlement based on the 1966 Geneva Agreement was therefore important. Dr. Zambrano said that he would raise this question with Lord Carrington.

The Prime Minister said she was glad to hear Dr. Zambrano's views on the Guyana border dispute. She was concerned that the extensive Press reporting of this issue was making a settlement more difficult. She agreed that it was important to avoid making the dispute an issue in Caribbean politics, and she therefore welcomed Dr. Zambrano's report of the recent CARICOM meeting. She commented that there were also signs that the Cuban's internal problems were helping to divert their attention from playing an active role in Caribbean affairs. She hoped that Dr. Zambrano would have useful discussions with Lord Carrington.

yours
Wilkie Ricketts

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