

LUX/FO 4/28

OO JEDDA

OO FCO

GR 500

RESTRICTED

FM LUXEMBOURG 220745Z APR 80

TO IMMEDIATE JEDDA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1 OF 28 APRIL

AND TO FCO.

X-9

IMMEDIATE

OP S.
Subject filed
SAUDI ARABIA:
Relations:
Nov. 79

ADVANCE COPY
PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
T 95/83

PS
PS/PPS
PS/PPS (H.M.)
PS/PPS
Sir J. MANTON
Mr. J. C. MANTON
H.D. MED
H.D. O.I.D
H.D. NEWS D
P.S. M. 10 DUNIGHT.

(DUP)

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO S/S

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOW APPROVED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO PRINCE FAHD. PLEASE DELIVER THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BEGINS:

YOUR HIGHNESS,

I AM DISTRESSED AND SADDENED BY THE UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES WHICH THE RECENT TELEVISION FILM HAS HAD FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND SAUDI ARABIA. I UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHISE WITH THE FEELINGS OF DEEP INJURY WHICH ARE FELT BY THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA. I ENDORSE THE EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET WHICH LORD CARRINGTON AND SIR IAN GILMOUR CONVEYED TO YOUR GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE PROGRAMME WAS SHOWN.

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM REPORTS OF THE EXCHANGES IN PARLIAMENT ON 24 APRIL THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN AND REGRET IS SHARED BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM ALL SIDES OF THE HOUSE.

OUR AMBASSADOR HAS I KNOW EXPLAINED OUR POSITION ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND BROADCASTING UNDER OUR OWN SYSTEM. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO POWER TO INTERVENE TO PREVENT BROADCASTS OR PRESS ARTICLES EVEN WHEN THESE ARE LIKELY TO GIVE OFFENCE TO OUR FRIENDS, OUR OWN POLITICAL LEADERS, OR EVEN OUR OWN ROYAL FAMILY. SINCE ITS SHOWING, THIS FILM HAS BEEN STRONGLY CRITICISED IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS WIDELY RECOGNISED THAT, AS THE LORD PRIVY SEAL SAID IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, "THERE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY INCIDENTS IN THE FILM THAT HAD VIRTUALLY NO FACTUAL BASIS AT ALL AND WERE BASED ON HONOUR AND HONOUR". BOTH THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING

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BASIS AT ALL AND WERE BASED ON RUMOUR AND INNUENDO". BOTH
THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING
CORPORATION WILL HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE ADVERSE COMMENTS AND
UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED THIS FILM.

THE GROWING TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE LATEST
VERY SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS IN IRAN UNDERLINE THE NECESSITY
FOR OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO KEEP IN THE CLOSEST TOUCH. THERE IS
A MOST URGENT NEED TO RESTORE RELATIONS TO THEIR NORMAL FRIENDLY
BASIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

I RECOGNISE THAT IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR OUR AMBASSADOR
TO REMAIN IN SAUDI ARABIA FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT I AM TAKING
THIS OPPORTUNITY BEFORE HE LEAVES TO CONVEY TO YOU MY HOPE
THAT YOUR AGREEMENT TO HIS RETURN TO JEDDA AND THE DESPATCH
OF YOUR NEW AMBASSADOR TO LONDON WILL NOT BE LONG DELAYED.
IN PARTICULAR I SHOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF MR. CRAIG COULD
BRING BACK WITH HIM FOR DISCUSSION IN LONDON ANY IDEAS OR
PROPOSALS WHICH YOU MAY HAVE AS TO HOW WE MIGHT PUT AN END
TO THE PRESENT MISUNDERSTANDING AND REBUILD THE LONGSTANDING
FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

YOURS SINCERELY,
MARGARET THATCHER

ENDS

THOMAS

NNNN

SENT AT 260820Z PB
RCVD AT 260920Z IJC