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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 84 OF 31 MARCH

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK. INFO PRIORITY JEDDA, ABU DHABI, DUBAI,
MUSCAT, BAHRAIN AND KUWAIT
INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, BAGHDAD AND UKDEL NATO.

VISIT OF S OF S FOR DEFENCE.

1. MR NOTT HAD A VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT HERE (28-9 MARCH), THE MAIN EVENT BEING AN EXCELLENT MEETING IN RESTRICTED SESSION WITH THE AMIR, WHO WAS EXTREMELY RELAXED AND AMICABLE.

2. MAIN POINTS WERE:

(A) THE AMIR WAS LOOKING FORWARD VERY MUCH TO THE PM'S VISIT AND SENT WARM GREETINGS.

(B) MR NOTT REITERATED HM GOVERNMENT'S SATISFACTION WITH THE RECENT MOVES OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES TOWARDS GREATER CO-OPERATION. HE TOLD THE AMIR OF HIS VERY PROFITABLE TWO DAYS OF TALKS WITH PRINCE SULTAN IN ARABIA, ESPECIALLY OVER SERVICE SECONDMENTS.

(C) THE AMIR SPOKE WARMLY OF UK-QATAR RELATIONS. BRITAIN WAS A HISTORIC FRIEND, WHO HAD STOOD BY QATAR ON MANY OCCASIONS IN THE PAST. HE WELCOMED CO-OPERATION BETWEEN US NOW AT ALL LEVELS. HE ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION MR NOTT'S ASSURANCE THAT WE WOULD NEVER SEEK TO INTERFERE IN ANY WAY WITH QATAR'S OWN INTERNAL DISPOSITIONS, BUT THAT IF OUR HELP WAS SOUGHT, WE ARE VERY READY TO GIVE MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE. MRS THATCHER WOULD GO INTO MORE DETAIL ON THIS ASPECT DURING HER TALK WITH THE AMIR. BUT ON THE DEFENCE SIDE, THE ASSISTANCE COULD TAKE THE FORM OF MORE HELP WITH PERSONNEL AND THE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT. WE WERE FOLLOWING UP THE PERKINS REPORT WITH ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE, E.G. FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AIR BASE.

(D) THE AMIR WAS GRATIFIED BY HM GOVERNMENTS APPRECIATION, WHICH MR NOTT CONVEYED, FOR HIS HELPFUL OIL PRODUCTION POLICY FOLLOWING THE IRAQ/IRAN WAR. HE SAID HE FOLLOWED SAUDI POLICY CLOSELY IN THIS RESPECT.

(E) ON AIR DEFENCE, THE AMIR CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE WAY IS NOW OPEN FOR US TO NEGOTIATE A QATARI PURCHASE OF RAPIER - AN ASSURANCE WHICH HE LATER REPEATED TO ME THROUGH HIS CHEF

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/DE CABINET,

DE CABINET, WHO HAD ATTENDED THE DISCUSSION WITH MR NOTT. HE QUESTIONED MR NOTT ON OUR VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAN, AND WHETHER WE THOUGHT THE IRANIANS WERE LIKELY NOW TO ATTACK THE GULF STATES. MR NOTT SAID THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR HIM TO FORECAST THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT POWER STRUGGLE IN IRAN. BUT HE HAD HAD DISQUIETING INDICATIONS, FROM HIS TALKS IN WASHINGTON THE PREVIOUS WEEK, OF SOVIET ACTIVITY ALONG THE JOINT BORDER WITH IRAN. THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE EXPECTED TO TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLOIT ANY COLLAPSE OF AUTHORITY IN IRAN. WE WERE SURE THAT THEY WOULD INTERFERE IF THEY HAD THE CHANCE. THIS WAS WHY WE THOUGHT IT SO IMPORTANT FOR THE GULF STATES TO CO-OPERATE, BOTH FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DEFENCE.

(F) THE AMIR WAS INTERESTED IN TALKS WHICH THE IRAQI DEPUTY PM HAD HAD IN LONDON: MR NOTT REFERRED TO OUR DECISION NOT SUPPLY QUOTE LETHAL UNQUOTE EQUIPMENT TO IRAQ AS LONG AS THE THE WAR CONTINUED.

3. MR NOTT AMPLIFIED HM GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON THE SUPPLY OF DEFENCE EQUIPMENT, AND THE SECONDMENT OF LOAN SERVICE PERSONNEL, AT A FULLER MEETING AT GHQ WITH SHAIKH HAMAD, THE HEIR APPARENT, MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND C-IN-C, AND HIS SENIOR OFFICERS. MR NOTT UNDERTOOK TO DO ALL HE COULD TO ENSURE THAT THE PRICES OFFERED BY UK FIRMS FOR DEFENCE EQUIPMENT WERE REASONABLE, AND DELIVERY SATISFACTORY, AND TO RESOLVE ANY PROBLEMS OVER THE SECONDMENT OF PERSONNEL. THESE ASSURANCES WERE VERY WELCOME TO THE QATARI SIDE: WE SHALL BE FOLLOWING UP AS NECESSARY. ON RAPIER, SHAIKH HAMAD SAID GHQ WAS STILL STUDYING BAE'S LATEST OFFER, PRESENTED LAST WEEK - GHQ WOULD CONTACT ME WHEN THEY HAD APPRAISED THE OFFER.

4. MR NOTT ASKED THAT THE PM SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS TALKS HERE. A FULLER ACCOUNT FOLLOWS BY TONIGHTS' CONFIDENTIAL BAG. IN DEFERENCE TO HIS HOSTS' INCLINATIONS, HE GAVE NO INTERVIEWS TO THE MEDIA.

5. I SHALL PURSUE THE RAPIER OFFER WITH GHQ, TO KEEP THE QATARIS UP TO THE MARK ON THE AMIR'S PROMISE. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT WAS HELPFUL - DESPITE MY EARLIER DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE - FOR THE CHAIRMAN AND SALES DIRECTOR OF BAE TO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR MR NOTT'S VISIT, AND TO HAVE JOINED MY DINNER FOR HIM AND THE QATARIS. IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IF WE COULD NOW ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT - OR AT LEAST A FIRM COMMITMENT - FROM THE QATARIS IN TIME FOR THE PM'S VISIT. WE

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WILL BE DOING ALL WE CAN TO SECURE THIS.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO WASHINGTON, BAGHDAD AND UKDEL NATO.

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