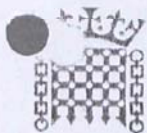


This is a copy. The original has been seen - MODRA  
been extracted and closed, 60 years 13/4/81

From JOHN BROWNE, MSc, MBA, MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

13th April 1981

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1.

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of April 2nd.

Further to my letter to you of April 10th, I apologise for the low standard of grammar and of presentation. My only excuse is that I was on an exceptionally high pressure overseas business trip from the night of Friday, April 3rd until returning for the three line whip on Thursday, April 9th. It was a rush to say the least. I have, however, attached a page with four important changes to the original text. I also now enclose the summary, as promised.

I will have delivered to your office a copy of the video tape that I mentioned to you and two pictures that I have borrowed from a Saudi bank in the City. The pictures are excellent ones of HM King Khalid and HRH Prince Fahed\* ~~~~~  
~~~~~\*. I submit them in the hope that you may benefit from studying their faces before you meet them.

Again, all good wishes for your visit to the Desert Kingdom - Land of the Prophet.

Yours ever  
John.

JOHN BROWNE

Enclosures

\* ~ \* Passage deleted and closed, 60 years,  
under a FOI Exemption. CWayland  
13 October 2011



## SUMMARY

The Gulf, and particularly Saudi Arabia, are regions of dynamic growth of a magnitude probably unequalled in human history. The world has known rich men previously but never has there been so much liquid wealth concentrated in personal hands. Now, many individual Arabs can write cheques for \$100M without consulting their bank manager! Added to this, the Arab culture is vastly different from our own and they tend to be very private and complex people. Advice on the area should always be given with humility and as a rough, general guide.

In general, the Arabs are highly intelligent with prodigious memories. They inhabit a land which, in many ways, is still medieval by European standards. Religion is still of great importance, both politically and individually. Ruthless political scheming, often resulting in bloodshed, is commonplace. Despite their religion, there is a huge and growing gulf between rich and poor and between leaders and the led. Rulers are absolute. The conversation of the elite is subtle. However, the Arab mentality is still geared to individuals; institutions have not yet come of age. Therefore, personal style and charisma are of the greatest importance.

The Arabs respect strength, wisdom and style. They are quick to recognise weakness and spurn it - usually by playing 'cat and mouse'; and they have plenty of time and money with which to play. In a national leader they will be looking for those qualities of strength, wisdom and style etc. In you, they will look particularly for the ruthlessness that they may feel you have not yet shown and need to show in order to turn our country around and restore Great Britain to a position where its friendship is of real value - real enough for them to make major concessions in our mutual interest.



Saudi Arabia has, under the Saud family, had excellent relationships with England - the protector and much admired 'Emperor State' of the world. They have used America for her technological expertise and now for defence. They have used the French, Italians, Germans, Lebanese, Japanese, South Koreans, Pakistanis, Palestinians (now no more allowed) and Yemenis to their great mutual benefit. However, they trust none of them as much as they do the British.

The Rulers of Arabia are super-rich. Their need is not money. Furthermore, the countries of the world flock to sell them arms and goods of all sorts. The Arab rulers appear to want for nothing and yet, each of them knows that their power hangs, especially in today's world, by a mere thread. What they need desperately is the political support of powerful, pro-Royalist, friendly nations that they can understand and trust.

Great Britain is friendly and pro-Royalist. The Arabs know us and trust us better than any other non-Arab nation (remember even Richard Coeur de Lion and Saladin). We can offer political support but it falls to you to convince them that we can deliver both power and influence. This will include the exercise of influence over the United States. I believe that you are well placed to convince them of this and that the day will be yours. The way will then be open to the political return of favours by the placing of major defence and project contracts with Great Britain. But such a way must be taken. We must deliver not only the politics but the goods. There will be a great need for co-ordinated follow-up, including the careful guidance, I believe in most cases, of 'over payments' or commissions. Once you have left, they will expect you to deliver. This will take much time and effort. It is for this reason that I suggest the creation and introduction of a 'Supersalesman', with diplomatic credentials and your personal backing.



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It is probably that your key interviews will be with: the King (equivalent to 'Chairman'); Princes Fahed (Crown Prince or 'Managing Director' - pro-American and industrialisation); Abdullah (National Guard - pro-British and conservative); Sultan (Defence); Naif (Interior - part of the Secret Service); Saud al/bin Feisal (Foreign Affairs - probably being groomed for kingship) and with Sheikhs Abu al Khail (Finance); al Qasaibi (Industry); Nasser (Planning); Khalil (Communications) and Yamani (Oil). You will probably also meet, amongst many others, Dr Rashid Pharaon and Khamal Adham (ex Head of the Secret Service) who were both close advisers to King Feisal. The former is still held in high repute although he does not speak good English. (His son is a prominent businessman and on the Board of Governors of Harvard Business School.)

Very great attention will be upon you, more than normal even for a national leader. You are English and you are a woman - a woman with strength and brains, a conservative, anti-socialist and a supporter of President Reagan, with (as they will perceive it) considerable influence over him. I believe the combination beckons a great success.



MEMORANDUM - LAND OF THE PROPHET - 10th April 1981

ERRATA

1. Page 2. Last paragraph should read:

"It is believed that the present Government wishes to reverse this series of failures and is prepared to work to achieve these results."

2. Page 11. Second paragraph should read:

"I am not conversant with exactly what type of presents should be given to whom.<sup>(2)</sup> I would recommend consultations with the Foreign Office but with the above point in mind. I would not tolerate any second-rate or vulgar ideas because they would be counter productive. The presents themselves will reflect your taste and genuine feeling of friendship. It is upon you that the central aim depends."

3. Page 11. Fourth line of last paragraph should read:

"style is most important"

4. Page 20. N.B. should read:

"Falcons. Falconry is a favourite sport of the Gulf Sheikhs, particularly Abu Dhabi and of the Princes of Saudi Arabia. Falconry in Saudi Arabia is equivalent to the same sport at the time of Henry VIII in England. Whilst many Saudi Princes no longer have the time to hunt their own falcons, they much enjoy visits to the desert, particularly in November and March, to watch their falconers to hunt their birds. The falconers have a privileged position in the household of a Saudi Prince - indeed in the old days, pre 1974, the birds travelled first class! Now they mostly travel in private aeroplanes. The birds are prized greatly and are virtually



a national emblem, although here there is a slight conflict with their religious teaching of making 'no graven image'. The sport is held in the highest repute and it is not uncommon to visit a Saudi Prince's office to find three or four falconers seated along one side with the birds so that they can remain accustomed to the voice of their master. Some Princes hunt with falcons from motor transport. Others, more traditionally hunt from horseback<sup>(1)</sup> or camels.

Whilst the falcon is indeed a most important part of the culture of Arabia, I believe, on reflection, that you are unlikely to have sufficient time to spend upon learning about them. Any forced conversation in that respect may therefore look false or insincere and be counter productive. I think you will learn most effectively from the video tape. Although they will not expect you to be an expert, I still believe that any opportunity to show even an amateur interest in the subject can prove very effective if timed correctly. I would therefore not waste much time on reading the book on falcons.

Note (1) It is interesting to note that, in conquering the country, King Abdulaziz ibn Saud always dispossessed the desert bedouin of their horses, whilst leaving them their camels, goats and sheep etc which they needed for survival. Horses were considered superfluous to survival and an effective fast war vehicle. Until very recently the Royal Family alone were permitted to own horses. Saudi commoners had to restrict their ownership to horses overseas. Now, however, this rule is breaking down and you may well be invited to watch horse-racing and indeed camel racing.