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RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MARGARET THATCHER MP, AND SHAIKH SARUR BIN MUHAMMAD AL NAHAYYAN AT THE RESIDENCE ON 21 APRIL 1981.

Present;

HE Shaikh Sarur bin Muhammad
al Nahayyan

The Prime Minister
Minister of State, FCO
HM Ambassador
P/Sec to Prime Minister

1. After the usual courtesies, the Prime Minister asked about the problems of the Federation.
2. Shaikh Sarur said that two years ago the Federation had been in danger of disintegration, because of disagreements between Shaikh Zaid and Shaikh Rashid. Now, whatever anyone said, the Federation would last because the people wanted it.
3. A further difficulty was that they were essentially a nation of tribes. An example was the recent trouble between a tribe of Ras al Khaimah [the Maharisa] and the Sharqiin of Fujairah. But the Federal Government had coped with that.
4. Then there were external pressures. Shaikh Saqr of Ras al Khaimah was involved with Iraq because he wanted to recover the Tunbs from Iran. The UAE wanted the Tunbs back but in their own good time and without external intervention.
5. The Prime Minister asked whether the disagreements between Shaikh Zaid and Shaikh Rashid were the root cause of the Federation's problems or whether those problems were inherent in the Federation's structure. Shaikh Sarur did not reply directly.
6. Finally, Shaikh Sarur said that there would be advantage in the Prime Minister's speaking on this subject to Shaikh Zaid and Shaikh Rashid when she met them both. Our interest and advice was acceptable to them. They had a long acquaintance with the British.

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