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SUBJECT

SUMMARY RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND HRH NAIF, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, IN RIYADH ON 21 APRIL 1981 AT 1215

After an exchange of courtesies, Prince Naif said that the hopes of the Saudi Government for an early solution to the dispute with Israel hinged on her visit. The Prime Minister said that she agreed that the need for a solution was urgent. She hoped that it would be possible to achieve one during the present United States Presidency. Prince Naif said that the Prime Minister's perseverance, decisiveness and speed of decision were well known. These characteristics made him hopeful that a solution could be found while President Reagan was in office. The Prime Minister said that it was going to be difficult to work out any solution in full. The important thing was to get negotiations started on the basis that each side accepted the rights of the other. Prince Naif said that the most important single issue was recognition of the rights of the PLO. (The interpretation was obscure at this point and it may well have been that Prince Naif was simply referring to recognition of the PLO).

The Prime Minister said that the British Government agreed the Palestinians had the right of self-determination. This was not in question. The problem was how to bring matters to the point where they could exercise it. That would be the subject of the negotiations. On the other side, it was clear that Israel had the right to exist behind secure borders. The issues had been set out in Resolution 242. This admittedly did not go far enough on the Palestinian question since it treated the matter as a refugee issue. To that extent Resolution 242 had been overtaken since all now accepted the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.

The Prime Minister asked how many Palestinians there were in Saudi Arabia. Prince Naif said there were 30,000. Agreeing that this was a small number, he referred to the restrictions placed on the entry into Saudi Arabia of anyone, whether Palestinian or not, thought to have leftist tendencies. Most of the Palestinians, who worked both in Government and in the private sector, performed well. Those who were thought to be leftist were "discarded".

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/ The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister commented that those who were excluded no doubt became troublemakers elsewhere.

Prince Naif said that it was because of the failure to solve the Palestinian question that ^{young} Palestinians had taken up terrorism. The failure of European Governments and of the United States to press for just treatment for the Arabs had driven the Arabs to adopt extreme courses. The Prime Minister asked whether the PLO would give up terrorism if negotiations got under way. Prince Naif said that he had no doubt that if the West changed its stance and pursued a just solution, the majority of Arabs and Palestinians would desist from entering terrorist organisations. The Prime Minister asked whether the PLO would stop training other terrorists. Prince Naif said that the PLO would stop but that one or two individuals might carry on.

Offshore oil installation

The Prime Minister said that the earlier British report on the defence of offshore oil installations had only been a preliminary one. We now wished to follow up with an expert report based on fuller analysis than had been previously possible. This had been mentioned by the Secretary of State for Defence during his visit to Riyadh. Prince Naif expressed regret that he had not been in Riyadh during Mr. Nott's visit. He had seen the preliminary report and thought it contained many constructive points. The Saudi Government were now thinking of sending a team to pursue the matter in the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister said they would be very welcome. We would ensure that they were given a full picture of how we defended our own offshore installations.

British subjects detained in Saudi Arabia

The Prime Minister thanked Prince Naif for the understanding way in which he had dealt with some individual cases of British citizens who had got into trouble in Saudi Arabia. There were still one or two outstanding problems, notably two who had been detained without charge and Mr. Christie. Having mentioned the matter, she proposed to leave it to the

/ Ambassador

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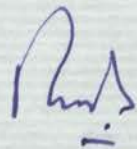
Ambassador to follow the matter up. Prince Naif gave the Prime Minister his word that he would look into any outstanding cases and give them top priority. But no doubt there would be certain aspects of the cases which had to be investigated further. He would discuss the matter with the Ambassador. The Prime Minister said she was very grateful.

Prince Naif commented that while he would spare no effort, the Saudi legal system had to be adhered to. The law must be observed. There might therefore be a case for an "awareness" campaign sponsored by the British Government to make people coming to Saudi Arabia aware of the laws and customs there so that they did not get into trouble through ignorance. The Prime Minister undertook to bear this suggestion in mind.

Prince Naif also said that sometimes Saudi visitors to London got into trouble through ignorance of the language and customs of the country. On occasion it was difficult for the Saudi Ambassador to sort matters out. Would the British Government use its good offices to facilitate the Ambassador's work? The Prime Minister said that we would certainly do so. She referred to a recent case where a police officer in Oxford had been suspended from duty following an incident involving a Saudi student.

The Saudi Ambassador in London raised the question of multiple entry visas for British businessmen to Saudi Arabia. Prince Naif said that in future British businessmen would be issued with multiple entry visas valid for six months. Invited by Prince Naif to raise any further problems affecting his work in London, the Saudi Ambassador said that there were none.

The meeting ended at 1245.



21 April 1981

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HR PRINCE NAIF (Minister of
the Interior)

Offshore Installation Glad
to advise on security; UK
has experience. Eager to
follow up recent visit by RN
experts by focussing on parti-
cular aspects where UK can
advise.