

CONFIDENTIAL

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Prime Minister

Middle East

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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London SW1A 2AH



20 May 1981

Dear Michael,

Tornado

Signor Forlani has sent the enclosed message to the Prime Minister through our Embassy in Rome in reply to the Prime Minister's message of 16 February.

As you will see, the message is drafted in very cautious terms. A brief is being prepared in consultation with the Ministry of Defence, for the Prime Minister's use when she sees Signor Forlani on 2 June.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)

M O D'B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
TO THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, MRS MARGARET THATCHER

I have considered with much interest the information you were good enough to send me in your letter on the subject of the possible sale of arms to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries of the region.

In general, I share your evaluation of the interest which the countries of Western Europe have in assuring the maximum stability ~~for~~ the region and ~~for~~ Saudi Arabia in particular. I note your observations on the implications which the possible sale of arms might have so far as Israel is concerned.

Moreover, I am not unaware of the economic interest of the transaction and the positive repercussions which it would have on the realisation of the MRCA programme, whose cost, as we know, is becoming extremely high.

I have invited our National Administration to examine the various aspects which this operation presents.

I am confident that it should be possible very soon to have constructive exchanges of view on what is to be done.



*Il Consigliere Diplomatico
del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*

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Roma, 16 maggio 1981

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Dear Ambassador,

I should be very grateful if you could kindly arrange for the enclosed message from the President of the Council of Ministers to be forwarded to Mrs. Thatcher.

Yours very sincerely

Luigi Bultrini

S.E. il Signor
Ronald Arculus
Ambasciatore di
Gran Bretagna
R O M A