

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

ANTI-RIOT TRAINING FOR THE SAUDI NATIONAL GUARD

You will be familiar with the Secretary of State for Defence's proposal to provide assistance in anti-riot training to the Saudi National Guard. The Foreign Secretary and other members of OD support this proposal but in the papers sent to you in the weekend box there was a minute by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland expressing reservations about the proposal. He feels that the United Kingdom could be accused of profiteering from the experience gained in Northern Ireland. I understand that you suggested that this should be considered at OD.

The Secretary of State for Defence is now in Saudi Arabia and has a meeting tomorrow with the Crown Prince. He wishes to be in a position to give the Crown Prince a decision on this. If this is to be done he will need instructions by 0915 a.m. our time tomorrow.

As well as asking for an early decision, Mr. Heseltine wishes to put additional arguments.

(i) having spoken to our Ambassador, he feels the Crown Prince will not understand why he is unable to give a decision. The request is three months old; it is a relatively small request for two officers and two NCOs for a period of six months; and it is the only positive point he has to offer the Crown Prince at the meeting tomorrow.

(ii) we are already providing military assistance through the Military Mission.

(iii) this assistance in Saudi Arabia is necessary to compliment the training already given in the United Kingdom. The fear is that the Saudi officers who have been trained here will not be able to pass on their knowledge without further assistance. In short there is a danger of leaving the project half completed.

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In the light of the urgency and the new arguments put forward by Mr. Heseltine do you:-

- (i) agree his proposal; or
- (ii) still feel that a discussion in OD is required.

Yes

Moller

for A. Turnbull
29 January, 1984

I agree - no
further discussion
required in OD.

mb.