

CDP 14/8

SECRET

7D

021

060127
MDADAN 9155

SECRET
FM WASHINGTON
TO DESKBY 132330Z FCO
TELNO 1915
OF 132225Z AUGUST 90
AND TO DESKBY 132330Z MODUK
AND TO IMMEDIATE RIYADH, ACTOR

SECRET

ADVANCE COPY

We discussed
If Commodore Wilson is satisfied with
US rules of engagement
I am discussing change
with MOD e will let you
have a

SIC
MODUK FOR DUS(P)

IRAQ/KUWAIT: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, PRINCE BANDAR, ASKED ME TODAY (13 AUGUST) TO PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. BANDAR SAID THAT A PROBLEM HAD ARISEN REGARDING THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROES) FOR THE BRITISH TORNADOES IN SAUDI ARABIA. THE AMERICAN AND SAUDI AIR FORCES WERE OPERATING UNDER COMMON ROES WHICH ALLOWED ENGAGEMENT WHEN RADAR CONTACT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED WITH A HOSTILE AIRCRAFT. BRITISH RULES ALLOWED ENGAGEMENT ONLY WHEN VISUAL CONTACT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. THE SAUDIS CONSIDERED THAT THIS LACK OF STANDARDISATION IN THE ROES COULD GIVE RISE TO OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES AND POSE A THREAT TO THE SAFETY OF THE BRITISH AIRCRAFT. THEY HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE SENIOR BRITISH AIR FORCE OFFICER IN SAUDI ARABIA THAT THE RULES COULD BE CHANGED, IF AT ALL, ONLY BY REFERENCE TO THE BRITISH CABINET. PRINCE BANDAR THEREFORE REQUESTED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE SAUDI RECOMMENDATION THAT THE BRITISH ROES SHOULD BE CHANGED TO STANDARDISE THEM WITH THE AMERICAN AND SAUDI RULES.

COMMENT

3. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN PARA 7 OF RIYADH TELNO 634 WHICH PUTS A RATHER DIFFERENT SLANT ON SAUDI ATTITUDES TO ROES. BUT BANDAR IS USUALLY WELL INFORMED AND UNLIKELY TO BE BEHIND THE GAME. IT MAY BE THAT AMERICAN PRESSURE HAS OVERCOME SAUDI RELUCTANCE. BUT IF PRINCE BANDAR IS RIGHT, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO ARGUE HERE THAT UK VIEWS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE LEADING PROVIDER OF AIR DEFENCE AND THE REQUEST (HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY ARRIVED AT) OF THE HOST NATION.

MEYER

PAGE 1
SECRET

SECRET

recommendation
CDP
13/8