

ADVANCE COPY

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FM RIYADH

TO DESKBY 061020Z FCO

TELNO 038

OF 060849Z JANUARY 91

INFO DESKBY 061100Z JEDDA (FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY)

YOUR TELNO 19 AND TELCON PLUMBLY/GORE-BOOTH: PANORAMA

1. DEPUTY INFORMATION MINISTER FARSI WAS ON TO US LAST NIGHT AND AGAIN THIS MORNING. DURING LATTER CONVERSATION HE SAID THAT MINISTER OF INFORMATION HAD CONTACTED HIM DURING THE NIGHT ON INSTRUCTIONS OF THE KING. MINISTER SHA'IR HAD URGED FARSI TO GO TO THE UK TO SPEAK TO THE BBC ABOUT THE PANORAMA PROGRAMME ON SAUDI ARABIA. HE WAS RELUCTANT TO GO, BOTH BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THE MEDIA WOULD PLAY UP THE FACT OF HIS INTERCESSION AND BECAUSE, IF THE PROGRAMME WENT OUT TOMORROW, HE WOULD BE TO LATE TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING ANYWAY. ON THIS LAST POINT HE ASKED WHETHER HE HAD HEARD IF THE PROGRAMME WAS LIKELY TO BE POSTPONED AS PRINCE SAUD HAD ASKED. FOLLOWING FURTHER TELCON WITH EMERGENCY UNIT, PLUMBLY TOLD FARSI THAT AS FAR AS THE FCO WERE AWARE, THE PROGRAMME WOULD GO OUT AS PLANNED TOMORROW EVENING. PLUMBLY DID NOT (NOT) ENCOURAGE FARSI TO GO AHEAD WITH VISIT. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER IF HE DOES DECIDE TO DO SO.

2. IN VIEW OF SAUDI INTEREST AND OF PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE, GRATEFUL THE DEPARTMENT LET US HAVE EARLIEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME.

3. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO 10.

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