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Saudi Arabia

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FM JEDDAH 231055Z JAN

TO ROUTINE FCO

TELNO 85 OF 23RD JANUARY 1980.

REPEATED TO ROUTINE AMMAN, MUSCAT, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON.
SAVING TO SANAA ABU DHABI BAGHDAD BAHRAIN BEIRUT KUWAIT
DOHA TEL AVIV.

*Read in full - contrast with King
Hussein's view as expressed to you.*

and

AMMAN TELNO 14: KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

1. IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY, FOR REASONS WELL KNOWN, TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN KING HUSSEIN'S JUDGEMENT OF THE SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA. ON THIS OCCASION I AM PARTICULARLY MISTRUSTFUL:
 - A. THAT HE SHOULD BASE HIS JUDGEMENT ON THE STATEMENTS OF KING KHALID IS PUZZLING. I HAVE MET KING KHALID THREE TIMES SINCE I ARRIVED HERE. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS ON EACH OCCASION AMPLE REASON FOR POLITICAL DISCUSSION (EG WITH YOU, SIR) IN FACT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE BUT AN OLD MAN'S REMINISCENCES, FOR THE MOST PART IN A SENILE MUMBLE. HIS ADVISERS WHO WERE PRESENT, INCLUDING SENIOR PRINCES FAHD DOWNWARDS MADE LITTLE PRETENCE AT LISTENING TO HIM CONVERSED AMONG THEMSELVES. HIS ONE REFERENCE TO POLITICAL MATTERS (WITH MR HOWELL ON AFGHANISTAN) WAS AT ABOUT THE LEVEL OF THE CHAIRMAN OF A SMALL TOWN ROTARY CLUB.
 - B. IF KHALID IS WORRIED ABOUT QUOTE A COLLAPSE OF THE SAUDI REGIME UNQUOTE IT IS STRANGE THAT HE HAS NOW GONE OFF FOR A MONTH'S REST IN THE DESERT.
 - C. THERE IS NOTHING NEW OR SIGNIFICANT IN THE SAUDIS' POSTPONEMENT OF A VISIT BY THE JORDANIAN COMMANDER IN CHIEF. THIS IS STANDARD BEHAVIOUR.
 - D. THAT KING HUSSEIN WAS ENCOURAGED BY HIS VISIT TO OMAN AND FAVOURABLY IMPRESSED BY THE SULTAN CASTS DOUBT ON HIS OTHER JUDGEMENTS. YOUR OWN PARTY CAME AWAY FROM MUSCAT WITH QUITE THE OPPOSITE IMPRESSION.

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2. IT IS TRUE THAT FAHD'S PERFORMANCE DURING HIS MEETING WITH YOU WAS DISAPPOINTING. HE SAID LITTLE SUBSTANTIAL AND WAS INCLINED TO WAFFLE. BUT THAT IS SLENDER EVIDENCE ON WHICH TO BASE QUOTE DEEP UNEASE UNQUOTE. PRINCE SAUD BY CONTRAST WAS ROBUST, CALM AND LUCID. PRINCE SULTAN WAS BUBBLING WITH CHEERFULNESS. PRINCE ABDULLAH HAS GONE OFF HUNTING.

FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

CRAIG

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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