

RESTRICTED

46745 - 2

for PS

No 10 DOWNING ST

*Saudi Arabia*

GRS 250

RESTRICTED

FM FCO 071545 OCT 1980

TO IMMEDIATE JEDDA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 574 OF 7 OCTOBER.

MY TELNO 572: ANGLO/SAUDI RELATIONS

1. MCCARTHY AND ARMITAGE SAW TRELFOED, EDITOR OF THE OBSERVER TODAY. THEY REMONSTRATED INDIGNANTLY ABOUT THE ARTICLE'S INACCURACIES, SOME OF WHICH THEY DESCRIBED AS LIBELLOUS. TRELFOED REVEALED THAT THEY THOUGHT MRS OUSMAN DEAD (SHE IS IN FACT ALIVE IN JOHANNESBURG).

2. HOWEVER, TRELFOED'S ATTITUDE WAS NOT UNHELPFUL. HE PROMISED TO CHECK ON THE FACTS WITH THE NUMEROUS SOURCES THE TWO GAVE HIM. THEY FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO PUBLISHING A RETRACTION, IF NOT AN APOLOGY NEXT SUNDAY IF THE SOURCES VERIFIED WHAT HE HAD NOW BEEN TOLD.

3. NEWS DEPT ARE NOW TAKING THIS UP WITH THE OBSERVER TO TRY FOR A RETRACTION ON SUNDAY.

MEANWHILE YOU MAY WISH TO TELL THE SAUDIS OF THE VIGOROUS ACTION TAKEN BY ARMITAGE AND MCCARTHY, AND OF OUR OWN PROPOSED ACTION IN ORDER TO PREEMPT ANY SAUDI COMPLAINT AND REASSURE THEM THAT WE HAVE NOT LOST SIGHT OF THEIR CONCERN.

4. OUR TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE PARA 1. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE STORY WAS BOUNCED OFF THE NEWS DEPT DUTY OFFICER LATE ON SATURDAY EVENING. HE DECLINED ABSOLUTELY TO COMMENT, EXPLAINING THAT THERE WAS NO WAY IN WHICH HE COULD CHECK SUCH AN OLD STORY OVER A WEEKEND. HE WAS TOLD THE STORY WOULD BE PUBLISHED ANYWAY. BUT THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE CONFIRMATION AND COULD NOT POSSIBLY JUSTIFY F.C.O. BEING CITED AS A SOURCE. 'F.O. SOURCES' THEREFORE STILL REMAINS A MYSTERY - WHICH WE ARE INVESTIGATING FURTHER.

CARRINGTON

NNNN

LIMITED

MED

NEWS

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ANGLO/SAUDI SPECIAL

RESTRICTED