

SUBJECT

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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. 742/83

OO WHITE HOUSE

GRS 250(A)

CONFIDENTIAL
FM CABINET OFFICE 291105Z MAR 83
TO IMMEDIATE WHITE HOUSE
TELEGRAM NUMBER MISC 100 DATED 29 MAR 83

FROM THE PRIME MINISTER
TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

DEAR RON,

1. I WANT TO TAKE UP WITH YOU PERSONALLY AND URGENTLY MY DEEP CONCERN AT THE PROPOSED ANTITRUST INVESTIGATION BY YOUR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INTO ALLEGATIONS, FOLLOWING THE LAKER COLLAPSE, AGAINST BRITISH AND OTHER AIRLINES OPERATING ACROSS THE NORTH ATLANTIC. THIS IS DUE TO START ON WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY OF THIS WEEK. IT COULD WELL HAVE THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR BRITISH AIRLINES.

2. AVIATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN HANDLED ON A BASIS OF CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND OUR RELATIONS IN THIS FIELD HAVE BEEN GOVERNED BY OUR BILATERAL AVIATION AGREEMENT WHICH IS OF LONG STANDING. MY PEOPLE HAVE THEREFORE PRESSED FOR THIS LATEST MATTER TO BE TACKLED ON AN AGREED BASIS. SO FAR THIS HAS UNFORTUNATELY NOT BEEN ACCEPTED. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RIGHT COURSE IS FOR FORMAL CONSULTATIONS TO TAKE PLACE AS PROVIDED BY OUR AVIATION AGREEMENT AND OUR AMBASSADOR HAS INFORMED THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF THIS. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT MEANWHILE THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INVESTIGATION WILL BE DEFERRED, SO AS NOT TO PREJUDGE THE CONSULTATIONS.

3. I URGE YOU TO ACCEPT THAT THE MATTER SHOULD BE HANDLED THIS WAY. OTHERWISE OUR AVIATION RELATIONSHIP WILL BE DAMAGED AND THE HARM COULD GO WIDER. THIS MATTER IS URGENT WHICH IS WHY I AM CONTACTING YOU IMMEDIATELY. I AM MOST DISTURBED ABOUT IT AND DO HOPE YOU WILL FEEL ABLE TO TAKE IT UP PERSONALLY AND VERY QUICKLY.

WITH BEST WISHES
YOURS EVER
MARGARET.

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