

GR 380

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

FM NEW DELHI 161230Z APR 85

TO IMMEDIATE DTI

TELEGRAM NUMBER OTTER 108 OF 16 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE FCO, ODA

FOR NEVILLE ROLFE FROM JONES.

YOUR TELNO OTTER 127: WESTLANDS

1. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE, HIGH COMMISSIONER CALLED ON GHAREKHAN, THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, TO DISCUSS THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. GHAREKHAN WAS GIVEN AN ACCOUNT OF THE TALKS MRS THATCHER HAD WITH GANDHI ON SATURDAY EVENING AND AT THE AIRPORT ON SUNDAY MORNING. HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO WENT OVER THE GROUND COVERED IN THE TALKS HE HAD WITH GANDHI IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF MRS THATCHER AND EXPLAINED THE PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS DESCRIBED BY GANDHI. HE WOULD NEED TO RECONSULT HIS EXPERTS AND WOULD THEN GET BACK TO US ABOUT THE MEETING OF THE TWO SIDES TO SORT OUT THE OPPOSING CLAIMS. HE EXPLAINED TO GHAREKHAN THAT TECHNICAL EXPERTS FROM WESTLANDS WERE EITHER ON THEIR WAY TO INDIA OR ABOUT TO LEAVE UK. GHAREKHAN CONFIRMED THAT THE INDIAN SIDE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE A UK GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE MEETING AND AGREED WITH OUR VIEW THAT A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF THE HIGH COMMISSION WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. (WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE OFFER OF SOMEONE FROM AIR DIVISION BUT DO NOT THINK THAT NECESSARY.)

2. GHAREKHAN UNDERTOOK TO LET HIGH COMMISSIONER KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WHEN AND WHERE THE MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE AND WHO WOULD LEAD ON THE INDIAN SIDE. HIGH COMMISSIONER EXPLAINED THAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDIAN TEAM LEADER WOULD HELP US DECIDE WHETHER THE WESTLANDS TEAM SHOULD BE LED EG BY TREACHER OR THE CHAIRMAN. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE IN ADVANCE AN AUTHORITATIVE LIST OF THE POINTS WHICH THE INDIANS WOULD WISH TO RAISE AT THE MEETING. GHAREKHAN TOOK NOTE.

3. HIGH COMMISSIONER WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THE DANGER OF CONFUSING THE OFFSHORE ROLE AND THE VIP ROLE. THE CURRENT CONTRACT WAS (AT INDIAN WISH) FOR 21 HELICOPTERS FOR OFFSHORE USE: AND IT WAS FOR THIS ROLE THAT THE HELICOPTER NOW IN BOMBAY HAD BEEN CONFIGURED AND TRIALLED IN DECEMBER. IT SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED AGAINST THE VIP ROLE. WE HOPE THAT INDIA WOULD AS A SECOND STEP WANT TO BUY THE PROPOSED 6 FOR VIP USE. BUT THERE WAS AT THIS STAGE NO COMMITMENT TO THAT AND NO DRAFT CONTRACT. NOR HAD THERE YET BEEN ANY DEMONSTRATION OF THE W30'S ABILITY, WHEN CONFIGURED FOR THE VIP ROLE, TO PERFORM SATISFACTORILY. BUT WE WERE CONFIDENT IT COULD DO SO AND WESTLANDS WOULD BE READY TO TRIAL IT HERE NEXT MONTH IF INVITED.

RESTRICTED

1A

4. HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL BE SEEING BHATNAGAR, DEFENCE SECRETARY, TOMORROW. WE HAVE HAD A REPORT, WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER CALLED A MEETING OF HIS EXPERTS THIS MORNING (INCLUDING DEFENCE SECRETARY) IN-ORDER TO GO OVER THE POINTS HE HAD RAISED WITH MRS THATCHER IN BOTH MOSCOW AND DELHI.

WADE-GERY

LIMITED

SAD
MAED
TRED
ODA
Ps
Ps/LADY YOUNG
Ps/MR RENTON
Ps/PJS
SIR W. HARDING
MR BRAITHWAITE
MR WILSON

A.D.

SUB CONTINENT

2
RESTRICTED