



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 June 1988

Dear Charles

Prime Minister's visit to Oman

We spoke earlier this week about the need to refuel the aircraft carrying the Prime Minister's party to Australia before it arrives at Salalah in Oman where the Prime Minister will be meeting the Sultan. The RAF insist that they cannot fly to Salalah without a refuelling stop. This will add two and a half hours to the journey time to Salalah.

The RAF say that refuelling is only possible in either Bahrain or Luxor. Apparently Cyprus is not close enough to the route to make a refuelling stop there feasible. Refuelling in Bahrain would take only one hour (the RAF have a representative there) as against one and a half hours (and a slightly longer flying time) if the stop was made in Luxor.

If the stop is made in Bahrain the Ruler of Bahrain will almost certainly insist on greeting the Prime Minister. However the meeting could be kept short and restricted to an exchange of courtesies. There need be no delay, but the Amir would be delighted by the briefest of meetings with the Prime Minister.

Even if it proved possible to bring forward departure to the evening of 29 July, which would give a longer stop-over in Oman, this would mean two long overnight flights to reach Singapore. This is clearly not to be recommended.

I should be grateful therefore if you would let me know if departure from London could be advanced from 0800 to 0700 with arrival in Salalah at 2050 (local time). Flying time to Bahrain would be 7 hours 20 minutes (ETA 1620 local) and 2 hours 30 minutes to Salalah. This gives a rather later arrival in Salalah but should be nonetheless acceptable to the Sultan.

Yours ever
Bob Peirce

(R N Peirce)
Private Secretary