



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

14 April, 1985

*Dear Len,*TORNADO FOR SAUDI ARABIA

During her visit to Riyadh on 14 April, the Prime Minister had a brief exchange with King Fahd about Tornado. The matter was raised by King Fahd who said that he understood that the Prime Minister wished to discuss a certain delicate matter tête-à-tête.

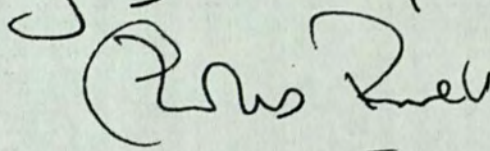
The Prime Minister said that she understood that the King had made a decision to buy Tornado but that we must be patient until he was ready to have this known publicly. In the meantime, we should keep the information strictly confidential. The King said that Saudi Arabia had indeed made a decision in principle to buy Tornado. They knew it was a very good aircraft. The French Government had issued a statement that Saudi Arabia would be buying Mirage. This was without foundation and the Saudi Government had taken the unusual step of issuing a denial. Negotiations were still needed on a number of matters relating to Tornado, including its low-flying capability, its range, the equipment which the version sold to Saudi Arabia would carry, and the need for a guarantee that spares would be provided from RAF stocks if necessary. In addition, the Saudi Government understood that a Mark 2 Tornado would be produced towards the end of this year. They would want to be sure of having the latest version. King Fahd added that he would send a special envoy to the Prime Minister to take these matters further. He concluded by saying that the Prime Minister had had a very beneficial visit.

The Prime Minister does not wish this letter nor the information in it to be passed to anyone other than the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, Sir Antony Acland, Sir Clive Whitmore, Sir James Blyth, Mr Egerton and HM Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.



SECRET CMO

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram in the  
Ministry of Defence.

Yours sincerely  


(C D Powell)

L Appleyard Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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