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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 March, 1985

Dear Mark,

Visit of President Mubarak: Briefing

In view of the events of recent days, we believe that the Prime Minister might find it useful to have a short brief on the Iran/Iraq war for her discussions with the President tomorrow.

I enclose a self-contained brief, with three copies.

Yours
Pete Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Mark Addison Esq
10 Downing Street

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK OF EGYPT:
15 MARCH 1985

IRAN/IRAQ

Our Objectives

To make clear to the President:

- (a) Our concern at the recent breakdown of the UN-sponsored agreement on attacks on civilian areas.
- (b) Our desire to see an improvement in the treatment of POWs in both Iran and Iraq and a resumption of ICRC activity in both countries.
- (c) Our condemnation of the continuing attacks on unarmed merchant shipping in the Gulf.

Arguments

- (a) Both sides agreed to the Secretary-General's appeal of June 1984 to cease attacks on civilian areas of population. We will support any action (in the UN or elsewhere) aimed at reducing the suffering of civilians.
- (b) The UN report on POWs, published in February, is balanced, criticizing the Iraqis for excessive use of force by some camp guards, and the Iranians for exerting ideological pressure on prisoners. We would support a statement on this subject by the President of the UN Security Council (rather than a Resolution).
- (c) These attacks on shipping are contrary to international law. The principle of freedom of navigation must be maintained.

His Objectives

- (a) to call for tougher action by the UN Security Council on ending the conflict.
- (b) (possibly) to press for a halt to UK arms supplies to Iran.

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Your Response

(a) The UK has supported all moves in the Security Council aimed at reducing scope of conflict. Need to avoid alienating Iranians.

(b) (Only if raised) We supply no items of defence equipment to either side which might significantly prolong or exacerbate the conflict. We have explained our position carefully to the Iraqis and their allies. Reports of UK supplying Iran with arms greatly exaggerated. Minimal supplies of non-lethal items have no significance to current fighting.

Background

Egypt is a strong supporter of Iraq in the Gulf conflict. A number of Egyptian nationals resident in Iraq have joined the Iraqi People's Army and are on active service.

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13 MAR 1985

