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7th May, 1981.

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

Dear Prime Minister,

I was very concerned to learn from John Raisman that during your recent visit to Qatar, you received an account of Shell's involvement in the gas projects there which we believe may have been presented to your party in rather a one-sided manner and, as such, may be representative of an unsatisfactory rivalry that has existed between the respective onshore and the offshore operators for some time.

Certainly we have had technical problems in Qatar. However, we believe that these have not stemmed from any fundamental design defects, but rather from operational mishaps that were very regrettable but unfortunately can happen occasionally.

However, what is disappointing is that the efforts that we have made to correct any deficiencies rapidly and effectively do not appear to have been brought to your attention during your visit; and from what John Raisman relayed to me, it would seem that the impression you may have received of our technical competence was unsatisfactory.

This distresses me as I believe that our technical competence in operations all around the world is second to none, and has contributed substantially to this country's deservedly high reputation in petroleum technology. I would be very unhappy to think that you personally held a different view.

We would of course be very willing to discuss the situation with officials if you feel that clarification of our position is desirable.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Baxendell.

*I would prefer
to see Peter Baxendell
personally.
mb.*

*18/5
Prime Minister:
The Dept of Energy have all the
papers: would you like them to
get in touch with Mr Baxendell
(his final para refers).
Aunt*

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