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FM WASHINGTON 231830Z
TO IMMEDIATE UKDEL CANCUN
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2 OF 23 OCTOBER

AND TO FCO

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK

INFO SAVING JEDDA TEL AVIV

MIPT: US/SAUDI ARABIA; AWACS

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER:

BEGINS:

DEAR MADAME PRIME MINISTER:

ON OCTOBER 14, 1981, THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO DISAPPROVE PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PROPOSED SALE OF AWACS SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT AND F15 ENHANCEMENT EQUIPMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA. WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, ARE CONCERNED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAY STAND READY TO SELL COMPARABLE NIMROD SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT TO THE SAUDIS. AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY, THE NATO ALLIANCE MUST SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REJECTED THE PROPOSED SALE BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL, AND BECAUSE OUR SENSITIVE ARMS TECHNOLOGY COULD BE COMPROMISED OR MADE AVAILABLE TO OUR ADVERSARIES. THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW GENERATION OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS INTO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT CAN ONLY WORSEN THE CHANCES FOR REACHING A LASTING PEACE IN THAT TURBULENT REGION.

IN ORDER THAT THE SENATE MAY BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ITS DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED AWACS SALE ON THE MERITS OF THE SALE ALONE, WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST ASSURANCES FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT ANY SAUDI REQUEST FOR BRITISH NIMRODS WILL NOT BE APPROVED AUTOMATICALLY, BUT RATHER, WILL BE GIVEN CAREFUL AND THOROUGH CONSIDERATION. WITHOUT SUCH ASSURANCES, THE AWACS DEBATE IN THE SENATE COULD BECOME ONE OF WHO WILL SUPPLY SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS TO SAUDI ARABIA, RATHER THAN WHETHER OR NOT SUCH WEAPONS SHOULD BE SUPPLIED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE VITAL TO WESTERN INTERESTS IN THAT REGION. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TOWARD PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF ADVANCED WEAPONRY AND PROMOTING PEACE IN THAT VOLATILE AREA.

ENDS:

FCO PASS SAVING TO JEDDA AND TEL AVIV

HENDERSON

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SIR A ACLAND

NAD

PS/LPS

MR GILLMORE

NENAD

PS/MR HURD

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FM WASHINGTON 231830Z
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INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK

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US/SAUDI ARABIA: AWACS

1. WE HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER (TEXT IN MIFT) SIGNED BY FORTY-EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OPPOSED TO THE AWACS/F15 ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE. THEY SEEK ASSURANCES FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT ANY SAUDI REQUEST FOR BRITISH NIMRODS WILL NOT BE APPROVED AUTOMATICALLY BUT GIVEN QUOTE CAREFUL AND THOROUGH CONSIDERATION UNQUOTE

2. THE CONGRESSMEN'S AIM CLEARLY IS TO INFLUENCE THE SENATE VOTE ON 28 OCTOBER BY UNDERCUTTING THE ADMINISTRATION'S MAIN ARGUMENT. THIS IS THAT IF THE AWACS SALE DOES NOT GO THROUGH THE SAUDIS WILL BUY NIMROD, AND THAT IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW IT IS THEREFORE PREFERABLE FOR THE AIRCRAFT TO BE SUPPLIED BY THE US WHO WOULD RETAIN SOME CONTROL OVER ITS OPERATION.

3. OBVIOUSLY WE CANNOT COMPLY WITH THE CONGRESSMEN'S REQUEST. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT I SHOULD REPLY ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S BEHALF THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REMAINS AS SHE DESCRIBED IT AT HER PRESS CONFERENCE IN KUWAIT ON 27 SEPTEMBER. I WOULD GIVE THEM THE TEXT OF WHAT SHE SAID (AS SET OUT IN KUWAIT TELNO 398), I.E. QUOTE WE STILL HOPE AND BELIEVE THE AWACS SALE WILL GO AHEAD. WE ARE NOT COMPETING WITH THAT. SAUDI ARABIA WISHES TO PURCHASE THE AWACS FOR HER COUNTRY. WE HOPE AND WE SAY PUBLICLY WE HOPE THAT THIS SALE WILL GO THROUGH. IF IT DOESN'T THEN OF COURSE WE HOPE THAT NIMRODS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN LIEU OF THE AWACS. UNQUOTE

FCO PASS SAVING JEDDA TEL AVIV

HENDERSON

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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