

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T184/80

Subject file

Iraq - situation - April 80

GPS 400A

SECRET

FM FCO 251910Z SEP 80  
TO FLASH UKMIS NEW YORK (FOR PR SEC)  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 780 OF 25 SEPTEMBER  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

MY TELNO 212 TO BELGRADE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER  
BEGINS.

I KNOW YOU ARE AS PREOCCUPIED AS I AM ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS  
OF THE CONTINUING CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN. SECRETARY MUSKIE  
AND LORD CARRINGTON ARE INVOLVED IN CLOSE CONSULTATIONS AT THE  
UN. OUR OVERRIDING CONCERN, OF COURSE, IS TO SEE THE CONFLICT  
BROUGHT TO A PROMPT END SO THAT ISSUES BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN CAN BE  
NEGOTIATED. HOWEVER, I WANTED TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH YOU ON  
ASPECTS OF THE CRISIS FOR WHICH I BELIEVE PRECAUTIONARY STEPS BY  
OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS APPEAR NECESSARY.

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE SECURITY OF SHIPPING IN THE PERSIAN  
GULF TO AND FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE OTHER GULF STATES. THE  
IRAHIAN INTERROGATION OF VESSELS ENTERING THE GULF AND THE SHARP  
CONSTRAINTS AND INCREASED PRICES FOR INSURANCE THREATEN TO REDUCE  
DRASTICALLY OIL SHIPMENTS FROM THE PERSIAN GULF STATES. WHILE THE  
WORLD CAN, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, ADJUST TO THE STOPPAGE OF IRAQI AND  
IRANIAN OIL SHIPMENTS FOR A TIME, THE EXTENDED HALT IN ALL OIL  
EXPORTS FROM THE GULF COULD BE AN ECONOMIC CATASTROPHE.

AS A FIRST STEP IN PREPARING TO DEAL WITH THIS POTENTIAL THREAT,  
I WOULD URGE THAT YOU MOVE ANY NAVAL FORCES YOU MAY HAVE IN THE  
INDIAN OCEAN AREA CLOSER TO THE GULF. SUCH A PRESENCE ITSELF  
WOULD BE A REASSURING FACTOR. ADDITIONALLY, I WOULD RECOMMEND  
THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS — WITH OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS —  
COMMENCE URGENT CONTINGENCY CONSULTATIONS ON HOW BEST TO ASSURE  
NAVAL PROTECTION FOR OIL TANKERS ENTERING AND DEPARTING THE PERSIAN  
GULF FOR PORTS OTHER THAN THOSE OF IRAQ AND IRAN.

SECONDLY, I AM CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS THAT MANY NATIONS AND  
SHIPPING COMPANIES ARE RESTRAINING THEIR TANKERS FROM OPERATING IN  
THE PERSIAN GULF, BOTH BECAUSE OF THE RISK AND THE PROBLEM OF IN-  
SURANCE. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS BE IN  
CONTACT, TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF FRANCE, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
OF GERMANY, ITALY AND JAPAN, TO ASSESS THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS PRO-  
BLEM AND CONSIDER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS. IF NECESSARY, WE WOULD BE  
PREPARED TO HOST AN APPROPRIATE MEETING IMMEDIATELY.

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| I HOPE

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I HOPE THAT HOSTILITIES CAN BE BROUGHT TO AN END SOON, BUT I SUSPECT THAT, EVEN IF THEY ARE, WE WILL BE FACED WITH DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT A CONTINUING THREAT TO SHIPPING IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT COULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF CURTAILING OIL EXPORTS IN THAT REGION.

I LOOK FORWARD TO AN EARLY RESPONSE.

ENDS.

CARRINGTON

LIMITED

HD | MED

HD | MAED

HD | DEF-D

HD | PLANNING STAFF

PS

PS | LPS

PS | MR HURD

PS | PUS

SIR J. GRAHAM

MR J. C. MOBERLY

MR BULLARD

MR. P. H. MOBERLY

MR BRAITHWAITE

COPIES SENT TO  
No. 10 DOWNING STREET

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