

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. 352/83



10 DOWNING STREET

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THE PRIME MINISTER

21 April 1983

SUBJECT

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Your Highness.

Thank you for your recent letter about the need to take steps to secure an early end to the conflict between Iran and Iraq.

We are deeply concerned at the enormous loss of human life, the grave suffering of the civilian population and the material destruction caused by this conflict. We are also aware of the threat to the security of our friends in the Gulf which any expansion of the fighting would cause. In 1982 we supported the two Security Council Resolutions calling on both sides to initiate a ceasefire and withdrawal to internationally recognised frontiers. It is tragic that these, and the various other attempts to reach a settlement, have so far proved unsuccessful.

As I am sure Mr. Hurd made clear during his recent visit to Kuwait, we are anxious to do all we can to bring this distressing conflict to an end. We are ready to support any new ideas which seem likely to contribute to progress towards a settlement. However, we have some doubts that action by the Security Council will prove effective. Until it is clear that both sides are willing to enter into serious negotiations, I fear that action by the Security Council would serve only to

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prejudice that body's ability to play a constructive role in any future peace-making effort. Similarly, we believe that precipitate action by the UN Secretary-General could jeopardise his future acceptability to both parties, and that it would be unwise to initiate such a move in advance of clear signals from Iran as well as Iraq that mediation efforts by him would be accepted. We have been in close touch with others about this in recent weeks, including other permanent members of the Security Council, and have found no significant dissent from this view.

Nonetheless, we agree that the Secretary-General could have a useful role to play in finding a solution, providing that, in his judgment, the time was right to take an initiative.

We are ready to play our part in any new UN-based initiative at the appropriate time, and we remain in close touch with the UN Secretariat to ensure that they take advantage of any new opportunity which might arise. We shall also continue to talk to our friends and allies about how we can best help. In the meantime we have encouraged the Secretary-General in his efforts to bring the two sides together to deal with the oil slick from the Nowruz field, which presents a growing threat to the environment of the Gulf. It is our earnest hope that the involvement of the Secretary-General in this limited field, as a first step, will enhance his prospects of mediating in the wider conflict.

Please accept, Your Highness, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely  
Rajiv Gandhi

His Highness Shaikh Jaber al-Ahmad al Sabah GCMG