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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

Merchant Shipping in the Gulf and the Armilla Patrol

1. Thank you for sending me a copy of your note of 25 June, addressed to the Prime Minister, setting out your plans for the Armilla Patrol.
2. Although there has been three further attacks on tankers in the Gulf (two by Iran - including one on a British ship - and one by Iraq) since your note was written, I have no objection to your proposals. In particular, I agree that the Armilla ships should remain within 5 days' sailing of the Gulf, but should not patrol inside the Gulf itself. Visits to the Gulf States by the ships should however be encouraged as a sign of our continuing interest in preserving stability in the area.
3. I am copying this note to the Prime Minister, other members of OD, the Secretary of State for Transport and Sir Robert Armstrong.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary

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