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Rt Hon. Margaret Beckett MP
Secretary of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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16 January 2007

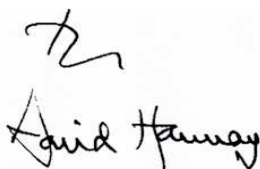
Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to express UNA-UK's dismay at the recent decision to terminate the investigation by the Serious Fraud Office into BAE Systems' contracts with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to supply it with Eurofighter jets.

The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act of 2001, which forbids British companies from offering bribes to third parties to secure business deals, constitutes an important pillar of the UK's stance against corruption. UNA-UK has been working, in particular with Transparency International UK, to strengthen that drive. The SFO's decision in this case is a major setback to our efforts.

UNA-UK welcomed the commitment in the recent DfID white paper, entitled 'Eliminating world poverty: making governance work for the poor', to "the need for greater cooperation in combating corruption" and to the UK working "internationally to tackle bribery, corruption and money laundering".

We do not see how the decision in the Saudi case can be considered to be compatible with that commitment; nor how it will result in anything other than a serious weakening of the UK's hand in future international discussions of these issues.



Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Chair, UNA-UK

Cc: Secretary of State for Defence
Secretary of State for International Development