

Whistleblow

When a former British colonel overseeing a £2 billion military deal uncovered unexplained payments he was told to get out quick, reports **David Leppard**

AS a veteran of military operations in Northern Ireland and Bosnia, former Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Foxley was no stranger to difficult situations. But in December last year, he was forced to flee Saudi Arabia after blowing the whistle on a corruption scandal that is threatening Britain's strategic relationship with the desert kingdom.

Foxley, 55, had spent the previous six months in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, working for a British firm called GPT, a subsidiary of EADS, which is based in Holland and is Europe's biggest defence and aerospace company.

He was the director of a top-secret £2 billion project to provide the Saudi Arabian National Guard with sophisticated communications equipment to help it protect the royal family.

The 10-year project is now at the centre of Foxley's bribery allegations, which are backed up by a second whistleblower.

The contract was highly sensitive because it was modernising the satellite, radio and intranet systems of the royal palaces and of the 125,000-strong National Guard.

Known as the White Army, the National Guard is separate from the Saudi Arabian defence



Ian Foxley, inset, found payments had been made in the Ca

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forces. Its job is to protect King Abdullah and his circle from uprisings and military coups.

Earlier this year, the force was involved in controversy after Abdullah sent it to help the Bahraini royal family crush

a popular uprising. Nick Harvey, the armed forces minister, told MPs that some of those troops may have been trained by the British military mission in Saudi Arabia.

The GPT contract specifica-