

Faxed to PM 14.8.90 CPC

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB  
Telephone 071-21 82111/3

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Prime Minister

MO 6/17/15S

13th August 1990

Answers to some of the questions which you put yesterday. On naval operations, the RN would scour inside the Gulf & the USN would operate a quarantine outside the Straits of Hormuz.  
IRAQ/KUWAIT I will see if I can find

You wrote to Dominic Asquith this morning about four subjects raised by the Prime Minister. cut more from Brent Scowcroft about the

The question of putting the case against Saddam Hussein is, of course, one on which the Foreign Office should lead but the MOD has a number of comments on the Prime Minister's other points. This reply has been agreed by my Secretary of State but it has not been possible, in the time available, to discuss these with other Government Departments. planned US response to chemical.

①

First, on the question of intercepting ships, after discussions with the US it appears that the most effective RN contribution, at least initially, would be to provide two ships to patrol inside the Gulf working in cooperation with the USN vessels stationed outside the Strait of Hormuz. The concept is explained more fully in the attached paper. RN surveillance operations have already begun in the Gulf and this co-operative arrangement could begin to operate within two days, subject to finalisation of practical details with the USN in the Gulf. (This is in hand.) At present we have no indications that there are any suspect vessels in the Gulf area. COP 14/8.

If enforcement action is to be fully effective ROE permitting the use of force, if necessary, will be required. Detailed ROE are being prepared, developed from those agreed in principle by OD(G) last week; these will be submitted tomorrow. To strengthen further the basis for enforcement action and for presentational reasons it might also be helpful to secure the agreement of major flag states that the RN may, if necessary, stop, board and search any of their vessels suspected of sanction breaking.

This concept of operations would also allow the ARMILLA patrol to maintain existing roles in support of British shipping and the

Charles Powell Esq  
No 10 Downing Street

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Gulf states. The current Iraqi threat is not judged sufficient to warrant the reintroduction of accompaniment of merchant shipping, although once shipping resumes use of the Saudi ports of Al Jubail and Ras Tanura it will be necessary to extend the ARMILLA operating area slightly further north to 27° 30'N. With 3 DD/FF deployed to the area, a sustainable patrol level is 2 DD/FF on operations in the Persian Gulf with 1 DD/FF stood down to the Gulf of Oman or a Gulf port at 24 hours notice, carrying out maintenance or showing a diplomatic presence.

The attached paper also discusses the need for international collaboration to collect and disseminate merchant ship intelligence. We believe that the UK is well placed to assume this focal role, which would also have the advantage of broadening the multinational nature of the naval operations in the Gulf. The Secretary of State has given instructions that this should be pursued urgently in consultation with the US.

② As far as pursuit of Iraqi aircraft is concerned, it was agreed following Simon Webb's letter of 9 August that UK aircraft would not fly over or within 25 miles of the Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Republic of Yemen or Jordanian borders. Once Iraqi aircraft had carried out offensive action against targets on friendly territory or attacked our own or friendly aircraft, it would no longer be appropriate to impose such restrictions on our activities. We are considering as a matter of urgency how we should extend the ROE in the event of such aggression but we will need to consult the FCO and the Law Officers' Department. The proposed changes will be circulated shortly with a view to seeking automatic implementation of revised ROE in the event of further aggression.

③ Finally, so far as the response to a chemical attack is concerned, the UK would be concerned to ensure that a response was measured, sent the right political message and was proportionate to the Iraqi attack. We should, of course, need to bear in mind our responsibilities and undertakings as set out in the Negative Security Assurance. The UK has no assets in the theatre of operations which could, by themselves, deliver an effective response to an Iraqi chemical attack. The Jaguar aircraft could form part of an offensive force but they are essentially ground support aircraft. Any conventional response against fixed targets would, therefore, have to be US led. It could cover the range from pin point attacks to saturation bombing, depending on intelligence current at the time.

Tornado GR1 strike aircraft could be deployed to the Gulf to take part in a strike on Iraqi chemical production facilities and delivery systems. The number of aircraft required and the protection needed (such as defence suppression) to destroy an Iraqi chemical production facility would require further study and depend on the precise target. The Defence Secretary has instructed that



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this be set in hand. Any operation would take a few days to mount once political approval had been received, and would need to be co-ordinated in-theatre.

Our current understanding is that the US response plans envisage conventional retaliation using B52s from Diego Garcia and Tomahawk cruise missiles from the Carrier Battle Groups. It could also include F111s from Turkey and F16s from the Gulf. We do not, however, have details of their plans and have been advised that the correct approach for information of this nature would be from you to Brent Scowcroft.

I am copying this letter to Dominic Asquith (FCO), Elisabeth Wilmshurst (Law Officers' Department), and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

*Janet Binstead*

(MISS J R BINSTead)  
Private Secretary

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*Jean R Binstead*

(MISS J R BINSTEAD)  
Private Secretary

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(A-B)

MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

D/MIN(DP)/AC/14/50

13 August 1990

APS/Secretary of State

Copy to:

PS/Minister(AF)

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CDP  
13/8

IRAQ/KUWAIT

*John*  
Minister(DP) has seen Charles Powell's letter to Dominic Asquith of 13 August 1990. Mr Clark would like a number of points to be taken into account in drafting a response. He would also like them to be borne in mind more generally in the formulation of operational activity in the Gulf:

a. Naval units and aircraft should always be armed unless particular circumstances make this impossible; this applies in particular to the MCMVs which, because of their very shallow draft, are ideally suited to intercepting coastal shipping in waters which would be hazardous for larger naval units;

b. While accepting the paramountcy of our close integration at command level with the United States Navy, it is important to bear in mind that the various European contingents are reluctant to accede to this arrangement in the same degree (or, in the case of the French, not at all). In conversation between Mr Clark and the Dutch Defence Minister this morning, this point was made very plain but the Dutch Minister did imply he would be quite ready to subordinate Dutch Naval units to an overall RN command and he believed that the other European Navies would be also of this view;

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c. As far as possible, legal restraints on hot pursuit and analogous action should be moderated so as to leave the decision in the hands of the senior officer on the spot which, in the case of aircraft, could mean the commander of the aircraft actually engaged. The question of hot pursuit cannot sensibly be considered

i. until the existing 25 mile restriction is lifted and

ii. appropriate defence suppression equipment, preferably under RAF command, is in place.

2. Mr Clark has not yet had sight of the full arguments against dispatch of a CVS to the theatre, although he understands that ARK ROYAL is at 48hrs notice. If a full defence suppression capability under sovereign control is to be put in place, this will mean at least one squadron of Harrier GR5s. Operational experience has shown that the CVS is a very useful adjunct to a mixed deployment of GR5s or Sea Harrier. However, he recognises that a CVS is a major Naval asset and, for this reason, would be particularly interested to see the advice which lay behind last week's decision.



D R A HATCHER  
APS/Minister(DP)