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*From the Private Secretary*

14 August 1990

IRAQ/KUWAIT

The Prime Minister is concerned to see that some of the smaller Gulf States feel that we have not been sufficiently attentive to their security needs and concerns in the present crisis, and are disappointed that we have decided to put our main military assets into Saudi Arabia and Oman in preference to them. She has also noted the intense diplomatic activity being conducted by the French Government in sending emissaries of Ministerial level around the world and in particular through the Gulf to explain what France is doing and to offer help. In the light of this, she thinks that a Minister should travel immediately out to the Gulf to convey reassurance to the smaller states, explain the measures we are taking and offer to meet any particular needs. The states in question are Bahrain, the UAE and Qatar. At the same time we should try to arrange for early rotation of some of our military aircraft through Bahrain and possibly the UAE to give visible evidence of our presence, in addition to the visit of HMS York to Bahrain. The Prime Minister would not want to see the present crisis erode our traditionally strong position in these states.

The Prime Minister is aware that both the Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary have it in mind to visit the area and our forces at the end of the month or in early September. She sees the present need as more limited and more urgent: an immediate demonstration of our support and concern. There would be no need to take in Oman and Saudi Arabia or visit our own forces at this stage. Forty-eight hours should be sufficient.

The Prime Minister assumes that it would be impossible for you to get away since you are coordinating the Government's response to the present crisis. She would hope that a Defence

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- 2 -

Minister could make a visit later this week, perhaps as early as tomorrow. I understand that Minister (DP) is on call.

I am copying this letter to Jane Binstead and Julian Scopes (Ministry of Defence) and to Sir Robin Butler.

The Hon William Waldegrave MP

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