



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister ²

Better than nothing but better still if

15 August 1990

the World Service

did not make a
leak of it!

Dear Dominic,

IRAQ/KUWAIT

Charles Powell's letter to me of 14 August referred to a BBC World Service report.

The report in question (a transcript of which I enclose) quotes the impressions of two expatriates that "most of the relevant Diplomats were either away on leave or had flown out of Kuwait during the early stages of the Iraqi invasion".

Mr Waldegrave spoke in strong terms to David Witherow and to John Tusa, pointing out that these impressions were utterly fallacious and that before publicising them the BBC should have checked with the Foreign Office. He asked that the BBC publicly refute the impressions. Mr Tusa agreed that a refutation would appear in the 4 pm World Service News Report today. This has indeed happened. I attach the transcript of the relevant news report. Mr Waldegrave thinks this pretty speeding response is tolerable.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Robin Butler, Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Asquith

Dominic Asquith
PS/Mr Waldegrave

Dominic Morris Esq
10 Downing Street

BBC WORLD SERVICE REPORT AT 1300, 13 AUGUST 1990

"Two women I've interviewed in London are particularly critical of the lack of help available from the British and American embassies in Kuwait. Their impression is that most of the relevant diplomats were either away on leave or had flown out of Kuwait during the early stages of the Iraqi invasion. Escapes have been organised instead by what they call groups of volunteers working with Kuwaitis. "

NMP

XN49 1524 15/08/90

LINES : T=31 P=26

1533

DESPATCH FROM =LONDON =

BY =JACK THOMPSON =

TAPE NO:238

=KUWAIT SITUATIONER/DIPLOMATS =
D. 1745

CUE: The Foreign Office in London says the overall situation in Kuwait appeared to be getting worse. Our foreign affairs correspondent, Jack Thompson, says reports from the British embassy in Kuwait suggest an almost total absence of law and order in the country.

The Foreign Office spokesman said general conditions in Kuwait appeared to be deteriorating. There were reports of wholesale looting - he didn't say who by. Food and petrol were still available but the banks had stayed closed. There'd been no significant improvement in the internal telephone service and no evidence of a civil police force. These reports are based on information supplied by the British embassy in Kuwait which like all others in the country has been told by the Iraqis to move its operations to Baghdad by the twenty-fourth of the month. Britain has twenty-five diplomats and officials in Kuwait. Contrary to impressions gained by some expatriates who've managed to get out of Kuwait, all but three of them were on duty at the time of the Iraqi invasion. The Foreign Office said the embassy had tried to stay in touch with the British community in Kuwait through a system of district wardens but with phone lines down this had not been easy. One of the diplomats is the consul, Mr Larry Banks. The Foreign Office said he'd again been unsuccessful in attempts to find the body of Mr Douglas Croskery, the British businessman shot dead by Iraqi troops as he'd tried to cross into Saudi Arabia at the weekend. The spokesman said that yesterday Mr Banks had been given full co-operation by the Iraqi military who'd provided an escort headed by a lieutenant-colonel to search an area



Minister

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

14 August 1990

Dear Dominic,

IRAQ/KUWAIT

The Prime Minister has seen Kuwait telegram no. 371, reporting the slur carried by the BBC World Service. She is incensed by this and hopes that the Foreign Secretary or Mr. Waldegrave will take it up at the highest level with the BBC and insist upon a public apology.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Robin Butler (Cabinet Office).

(C. D. POWELL)

The Honourable Dominic Asquith,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.