

CONFIDENTIALPRIME MINISTERIRAQ

You will have seen the press reports and telegrams sent down to you about the detention of foreign nationals. I have been in touch with the Foreign Office over the course of the morning. I thought you might like to know the latest information we have and how the Foreign Secretary is handling the situation.

You may have heard on the latest news bulletin that there are Iraqi reports of foreign nationals now being moved. These are rumours and we have no confirmation of them. We have heard in the last half hour or so that the American Ambassador was told by the Iraqi Ambassador to Kuwait that US nationals attempting to leave the country would be shot. However, the Iraqis say that US nationals would not be rounded up.

We are still urgently seeking information on who is covered by this announcement. There was a report on the one o'clock news that the two million Egyptians in Iraq and Kuwait are exempt. I am told by the Foreign Office that the press say that there will be a statement by the Iraqi Minister of Labour about the position at 4 o'clock. They assume this is 4 o'clock our time.

The UK have made strong protests to the Iraqi Ambassador in London. The Foreign Secretary is planning to put down a further statement of his own along similar lines to the Foreign Office statement you have already seen. More generally, the Foreign Secretary thinks that we should allow the UN Secretary General time to pursue his initiative. This would also appear to be the US view though we are still getting information on the US position - they have of course been asleep through much of the morning.

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The Foreign Secretary thinks that the next step may be to approach the UN for a Resolution perhaps going more widely than simply the position on hostages. He thinks this is probably the US position too.

Yesterday Cranley Onslow spoke to the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Secretary had asked for an account of the conversation to be relayed to you. Mr Onslow said that he thought Parliament should be recalled now for a one day session. He did not think that we could last until October; and he thought it would be useful to discuss the position on UK hostages. The Foreign Secretary has spoken to the Lord President, who is in Queensland, the Lord President said that from such a distance it was difficult to judge. But in his view, it was not necessary yet to recall Parliament. The Foreign Secretary will want to speak to you about this tomorrow when he sees you.

I will keep you in touch with any further significant developments.

Caroline Slocock

18 August 1990