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SUBJECT CC MASTER

CAROLINE

*File*

*AB*

*Mary Morris, David -  
a good note*

*MS*

The Attorney General telephoned the Prime Minister this evening to discuss Rules of Engagement (I monitored the call as you had just left No. 10 and the Attorney General was in no mood to be stalled)!

He started by saying that he was totally content with the revised Rules of Engagement and the Prime Minister commented that she had seen his department's letter and the Foreign Office comments which she had received by fax this afternoon in Cornwall.

They then went on to discuss the situation in the Middle East in general terms. The Prime Minister was keen to know if it was possible to use international law as another weapon against Saddam Hussain. The Attorney General responded by saying Hussain was clearly not the sort of man to pay heed to any form of law, international or otherwise, and that if anything we should consider international law to be more of a shield than a sword. The Prime Minister felt that it was important that we reminded all concerned of Iraq's initial act of aggression against Kuwait and did not lose sight of this amongst all the allegations of aggression and military build-up by the US and her allies.

They also discussed the magnitude of the American military presence and whether this might be construed as being an offensive force rather than a defensive one. The Prime Minister considered that from what we know of the threat posed by Iraqi forces the proposed levels of American military hardware were totally consistent with an effective defensive force. Another reason for maintaining a strong military presence is to reassure friendly Arab States, especially Saudi Arabia, of our capability to withstand attack and also in the sense that the American forces may well be dispersed anyway to counter threats in other locations.

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- 2 -

The conversation concluded with the Prime Minister telling the Attorney General about tomorrow's meeting and inviting him to attend. He replied that it would be very worthwhile and looked forward to seeing her tomorrow.

*Stacey .*

DAVID STACEY  
(Duty Clerk)  
19 August 1990

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