

8 (a-b) Box a



Prime Minister

10 DOWNING STREET
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4/9.

From the Private Secretary

4 September 1990

We will discuss -
The main point to put over
to the Russians is that unconditional
cessation of state attacks
is all - i.e. international
law - the
upholding of it
is not an

GULF CRISIS

I had a conversation on the secure telephone this evening with General Scowcroft in the White House, mostly about the President's forthcoming meeting with President Gorbachev in Helsinki.

I said that the Prime Minister was intending to send Gorbachev a message ahead of the meeting. It would be helpful to her to know a bit more about what the Americans hoped to achieve. We did not yet have a clear view of their objectives. General Scowcroft said that the main purpose was, quite simply, to keep the Russians committed to the objectives of the UN Security Council resolutions and ensure there was no back-sliding. There seemed to be some internal debate within the Soviet Government on the right position to take: and some days ago there had been a lot of talk about an Arab solution, possible compromises and so on which had suggested to the Americans some backing away from the earlier and generally satisfactory Soviet stance. This had been much in their minds at the time it had been decided to go for the meeting in Helsinki. But yesterday Gerasimov had come out with a very firm statement about Soviet objectives, which went a long way to reassure the Americans. To come back to my original question: the answer was that the President hoped to influence the internal debate within the Soviet Union and keep the Russians aboard.

And
Pravda
with
world
problems
not

I asked whether the President was likely to raise the issue of the possible need to use force if sanctions did not work. General Scowcroft said this was a good question and one which the Americans had not really addressed yet. He thought the President would probably raise the point indirectly. He might speculate about a situation in which sanctions were not effective and seek Gorbachev's confirmation that, in those circumstances, the Soviet Union would still remain committed to the objectives of the UN resolutions. General Scowcroft continued that he thought it would be very useful if the Prime Minister's message could compliment Gorbachev on the position which the Soviet Union had taken so far, and underline the

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importance of remaining committed to the objective of Iraqi withdrawal and, in her own phrase, "not going wobbly". General Scowcroft added that it was even more important to go on making this last point to our Arab friends.

I asked General Scowcroft whether he expected other issues to be discussed at the meeting. He said he thought there would be some bilateral points to be covered, and discussion of Cambodia and Afghanistan. But he did not expect arms control to feature much: things had not changed sufficiently since the last meeting between the President and Gorbachev.

General Scowcroft said (I think) that the President would be sending a message about the meeting to a number of heads of government.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence) and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

(CHARLES POWELL)

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