

PRIME MINISTER

GULF CRISIS: MEETING OF MINISTERS

You have a regular meeting of Ministers on the Gulf crisis this morning, followed by a meeting with US Treasury Secretary Brady at 1100. The Foreign Secretary is still away and Mr. Waldegrave will represent him.

The main items which you will want to cover are set out below. You will want to take the diplomatic points rapidly. There is more to talk about on the military side today.

DIPLOMATIC

Bush/Gorbachev Meeting

You have received a message from the President overnight about this. I have spoken to Scowcroft. The main lines of a message from you to Gorbachev are fairly clear: above all, stick to the objectives of the UN resolutions. You ought also to telephone the President before your visit to Washington.

*See the
his visit to US work*

Baker's Statement to Congress

We are obtaining a transcript. It seems to make many of the same points as your speech to the House. (We are also getting a transcript of Kinnock.)

*and the David Frost broadcast
last week*

Hostages

The women and children from Kuwait are safely in hotels in Baghdad. We are hoping to run another convoy tomorrow for those who were too worried or fearful to join the first one. We hope to fly the women and children out of Baghdad on Thursday night, arriving here early on Friday.

Embassies in Kuwait

You have seen the telegram about the future of Embassies in Kuwait, and how best to cope as the dominoes start to fall. You will need recommendations from the FCO in due course: but it is not urgent yet.

Isolated

Ashdown letter

You intend to reply to the Ashdown letter before tomorrow's debate, and then hold fast to the formulation in the debate itself. Kinnock has now also adopted the Ashdown position. The Attorney has done you a note (attached) which argues:

- Kuwait would have to put in a further request, in order to justify the use of force under Article 51. The first request dealt only with enforcement of economic measures.
- the Security Council measures in Resolutions 660-5 have not abrogated the right of self-defence under Article 51 (indeed Resolution 661 specifically reaffirms it).
- so the use of force would have only to meet the 'normal tests' of Article 51 (immediacy, necessity, proportionality).

This is helpful (if a trifle belated).

Foodstuffs and Sanctions

Discussions continue in New York over the question of foodstuffs and sanctions, and what constitutes 'humanitarian purposes'.

MILITARY

Consultations with the US

CDS has returned from meeting General Colin Powell. You will wish him to report.

Additional British Forces

Prince Saud has made a pressing request for additional British forces. So too have Secretary Baker, the US Commander and several members of Congress, all asking for the commitment of ground forces. CDS will be able to report what General Powell said to him. Subject to this, you will want to task the Defence Secretary to come forward with some early proposals (which you may want to discuss in a full OD). The key question would be the sort of ground forces. Would they be armoured? Can British tanks survive in the desert (they don't do too well in Germany!)?

Interception of Shipping

The position over the ^uZenobia is confused: it now appears to have been diverted to Aden. The three tankers remain stationary near Mina in the northern Gulf. Tea

Military Equipment for Bahrain

You will have seen the irate telegram from our Ambassador in Bahrain about our failure to meet Bahrain's defence supply needs. You will want to enquire what went wrong, and how to avoid it in future.

CDD
CHARLES POWELL

5 September 1990

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