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*From the Private Secretary*

5 September 1990

*Dear Mr. Ashdown,*

Thank you for your letter of 3 September about the Government's policy in the Gulf. I wanted to reply quickly before tomorrow's debate in Parliament.

The Government's aims remain as I described them in my letter to you of 31 August. We want Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, in fulfilment of the UN Security Council's five Resolutions. The method which the international community has chosen in Resolutions 661 and 665 is comprehensive economic sanctions, while at the same time affirming the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in response to the armed attack by Iraq against Kuwait, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter.

Iraq has so far shown no sign whatsoever of being prepared to meet the demands which have rightly been made of it by the international community. No one can predict now what steps may ultimately be necessary to make Iraq comply with its international obligations. I am not prepared to give Saddam Hussain the comfort of excluding any legitimate options, including action in collective self-defence. Iraq's obligations are clear and are not negotiable.

Until Iraq complies, the measures agreed by the Security Council in its five Resolutions will not have achieved their

stated aim, and the Security Council cannot be said, therefore, to have taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security as required under Article 51. In these circumstances, I am advised that the argument that the UN Charter deprives the States affected of their inherent right of self-defence is not well-founded.

We have been asked by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other allies in the region to assist them in the exercise of their right of individual and collective self-defence. Their objectives and those of the Security Council's Resolutions are the same, a speedy end to Iraqi aggression. In responding to their requests we shall take whatever measures are necessary to achieve these common objectives. We have no doubt that they and we are acting in full accordance with the UN Charter.

Yours sincerely

Nagant Shahar

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