

PS/NO 10

SECRET AND PERSONAL
DEDIP

FM TOKYO
TO DESKBY 100900Z FCO
TELNO 772
OF 100200Z SEPTEMBER 90

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR PS/NO 10 FROM PS/FCO

GULF: FUTURE FORCE LEVELS

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF A MINUTE FROM THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TO
THE PRIME MINISTER

BEGINS

1. WHILE I AM AWAY, YOU WILL BE DISCUSSING WHETHER TO MAKE
A FURTHER FORCE CONTRIBUTION TO THE GULF. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR
ME TO JUDGE WHAT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE OPERATIONALLY WITHOUT
KNOWING MORE OF THE SERVICE SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT AND OF US THINKING.
BUT FROM THE POLITICAL/FOREIGN POLICY SIDE, I CANNOT SEE
GREAT ADVANTAGE IN PUTTING IN MORE AIRCRAFT. I DOUBT IF THIS WOULD
GIVE US AN EXTRA DIVIDEND IN TERMS OF THE AMERICAN VIEW OF OUR
COMMITMENT OR INCREASING THE PRESSURE ON SADDAM HUSSEIN.

2 I THINK THERE IS A CASE FOR SOME NAVAL REINFORCEMENT. OUR
SHIPS ARE VULNERABLE TO EXOCET ATTACK AND IN THE EVENT OF
HOSTILITIES THEY MIGHT NEED THE EXTRA PROTECTION OF A CARRIER GROUP.
I WOULD THEREFORE FAVOUR THE DEPLOYMENT OF SUCH A GROUP, IF IT IS
THOUGHT OPERATIONALLY NECESSARY, THOUGH I REALISE THERE WOULD
BE A LIMIT ON HOW LONG SUCH A GROUP COULD BE DEPLOYED.

3. THE AMERICANS - AND THE SAUDIS - HAVE ASKED US TO PUT IN GROUND FORCES. I THINK THERE IS A GOOD CASE FOR DOING SO, EITHER REPLACING AMERICANS BY ROULEMENT, OR SEPARATELY. THE HELSINKI SUMMIT, THE SAUDI ATTITUDE AND PRESIDENT BUSH'S OWN INSTINCTS MAY MEAN THAT THE SITUATION CONTINUES AS IT IS NOW FOR QUITE SOME TIME. IF SADDAM HUSSEIN IS TO BE PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW, WE HAVE TO KEEP BUILDING UP THE PRESSURE SO THAT HE FEELS THE SCREW TIGHTENING, CANNOT RELY ON SANCTIONS BEING OUR ONLY OPTION AND IS MADE INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT, IF HOSTILITIES BREAK OUT, HE WILL NOT WIN. WE HAVE RIGHTLY GOT A LOT OF CREDIT FOR THE SPEED OF OUR RESPONSE BUT AS WE BUILD UP THE PRESSURES ON SADDAM HUSSEIN, AND AS WE FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF COMBAT, THEN I DO NOT THINK THAT OUR PRESENT FORCE LEVELS OR THE ADDITION OF A CARRIER GROUP WOULD BE ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT WE WERE REGARDED BY ALL AS A DECISIVE CONTRIBUTOR WHO SHOULD BE CLOSELY INVOLVED AT ANY STAGE. WE SHOULD PUT TROOPS IN ON THE GROUND. PRECISELY WHAT FORM THAT TAKES MUST BE A QUESTION OF WHAT FITS BEST WITH THE AMERICAN DEPLOYMENT AND WHAT WE CAN DO MOST EFFECTIVELY. BUT AN ARMoured BRIGADE WOULD BE A SENSIBLE COMMITMENT, PROVIDED WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR EQUIPMENT, PARTICULARLY TANKS WILL WORK EFFICIENTLY. THE NUMBERS SHOULD AGAIN BE A MATTER OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS. BUT MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND COULD STRIKE PUBLIC OPINION AT HOME AS EXCESSIVE. LESS THAN 5,000 WOULD LOOK LIKE TOKENISM

4. DEPLOYING TROOPS ON THE GROUND WOULD CREATE A NEW DIMENSION TO OUR RESPONSE. IF THAT IS THE RECOMMENDED DECISION, I THINK IT WOULD BE PRUDENT FOR IT TO BE ENDORSED BY A WIDER GROUP OF MINISTERS, EITHER OD OR CABINET. IN MY ABSENCE, I WOULD BE CONTENT FOR THIS MINUTE TO GO TO OTHER MINISTERS IF YOU WISH.

5. WE ARE LIKELY TO COME UNDER PRESSURE ON COSTS. ANY FRESH BUILD-UP WILL COINCIDE WITH A NECESSARILY HARSH PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ROUND. STRINGENCY ON SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS WILL BE CONTRASTED WITH THE MILLIONS SPENT IN THE GULF, ONCE THE OPPOSITION HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL FORM. IT WOULD BE HARD TO DEFEND A POSITION WHERE US MILITARY COSTS ARE TO A SIZEABLE EXTENT CARRIED BY THE SAUDIS, JAPANESE AND PERHAPS OTHERS, WHILE OURS ARE NOT. NO-ONE CAN ACCUSE US OF GOING THERE IN A MERCENARY SPIRIT AND I HOPE WE COULD INSERT OUR MILITARY COSTS INTO THE BURDEN-SHARING EXERCISE. WITHOUT MAKING A REQUEST AT THIS STAGE, I WILL PROBE THE JAPANESE IN THIS AREA TODAY.

6. IF WE TAKE A DECISION TO DEPLOY GROUND FORCES, THERE ARE ADVANTAGES IN ANNOUNCING IT UNILATERALLY. BUT THERE WOULD ALSO BE ADVANTAGE IN LETTING THE FRENCH, AS THE OTHER MAJOR EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTOR, KNOW WHAT WE WERE DOING. WE DO NOT WANT TO START A COMPETITIVE AUCTION BETWEEN US AND IT IS IN OUR LONGER TERM INTEREST TO WORK WITH THEM WHEN WE CAN. WHEN A DECISION IS TAKEN, I RECOMMEND THAT YOU SHOULD PHONE PRESIDENT MITTERRAND VERY SHORTLY BEFORE IT IS ANNOUNCED. YOU MIGHT CONSIDER TELLING ANDREOTTI ON THE SAME BASIS. YOU HAVE DISCUSSED THESE ISSUES WITH HIM BEFORE. AS PRESIDENCY HE WILL BE CHAIRING THE MEETINGS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WHERE THESE MATTERS ARE BOUND TO COME UP, AND THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR KEEPING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM. WE SHOULD ALSO TELL KING FAHD.

7. I AM COPYING THIS MINUTE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE.

ENDS