

Jp 01120

MR POWELL

cc Sir Robin Butler  
Mr Wall, FCO  
Mr Webb, MOD

Resupply of our Kuwait Embassy

At the Prime Minister's meeting last week I was asked to investigate the possibility of resupplying our Embassy in Kuwait by Special Operations.

2. I have discussed with the relevant Departments and Agencies. The situation in the Kuwait Embassy is that there are four British diplomats headed by the Ambassador. The Embassy in which they live and work is surrounded by 10-12 ft high walls with barbed wire on top. Streets run alongside the walls. Two at least are well lit. Outside, the Embassy is under the surveillance of guards. Kuwait City itself is dense with Iraqi infantry. The occupants reckon they have supplies to last for 50 days (about the end of October with reduced communications activity). After that they will need water, food and fuel.

3. The German Embassy say they will try to hold on as long as possible. They cannot put a figure to this. Utilities to their offices in Kuwait are cut off but their generator has enough fuel for occasional use. The Ambassador's Residence, where all the staff are now living, still has mains power and water. The French have no immediate plans to withdraw their diplomats from Kuwait. Utilities to the French Embassy are cut but they have enough food and water for 2-3 weeks. The State Department estimates that the US Embassy has sufficient supplies for at least one month.

4. We looked at the possibility of resupply of our Embassy by means of a military operation. This has been

carefully examined in the Ministry of Defence and the military view is that the hazards in relation to benefits would be excessive. Kuwait and its approaches are heavily defended. There are mines on the beaches and plentiful air defence. The sea approaches are patrolled by Iraqi fast patrol boats. We have no available submarine and a sea approach would involve bringing in a destroyer or frigate dangerously close to the shore. A parachute drop is impracticable: it would have to be from a considerable height and into a very small landing area. Helicopters would be particularly vulnerable and, although it might be possible for a helicopter to make a one-way journey, landing but not leaving, this would merely add to the number of prisoners and people to be fed and would expose the helicopter crew to probably fatal reprisals by the Iraqis.

5. We have taken soundings on the prospects of using the local population with the help of the Kuwaiti Resistance to drop small quantities of supplies over the walls at night.

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The initial reaction was that resupply of the Embassy in this way would be very difficult and dangerous. The Kuwaitis will, however, examine it further.

6. I understand the FCO has a submission in hand intended to clarify policy over EC Embassies staying on in Kuwait. This will examine the benefit/cost equation of staying on beyond the next two weeks.

*ke*  
PERCY CRADOCK

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