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PRIME MINISTER

MEETING OF MINISTERS: THE GULF

You have a meeting of Ministers before Cabinet tomorrow to discuss the situation in the Gulf. Mr. Waldegrave will represent the Foreign Secretary.

The main issues you will want to cover are the following.

DIPLOMATIC

- Foreign Secretary's Visit You could ask William Waldegrave to report. You will find some of the telegrams in your box. The Foreign Secretary is intending to make a Statement on his return.

- Activity at the UN We are at odds with the Americans on the next UN resolution. We have prepared a draft which covers compensation/reparations and individual responsibility for war crimes. It seemed originally to have support from Pickering, the French and the Russians. But Secretary Baker thinks this too difficult to obtain now, although he is ready to join us in launching it next week. Meanwhile he considers it important to demonstrate that the unity of the Security Council on Iraq/Kuwait remains intact, despite the Jerusalem killings. He prefers to go for a quick resolution focussing on humanitarian issues in Kuwait, reprovisioning of Embassies and the right of diplomats and hostages to leave. We have gone back to the Americans pointing out that a compensation resolution has many attractions for third world countries: and that delaying until next week could get us entangled with a renewed Arab/Israel debate. Efforts to convince the Americans continue: we should know the outcome by tomorrow. The texts are in the folder.

In a separate development, the Russians have proposed a special meeting of the Military Staff Committee at Chief

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of Staff level, to intimidate the Iraqis. We are holding this up to the light, to see what the catch is.

- Diplomatic activity Primakov is in orbit, and will be briefing the President on his mission to Baghdad. It is significant that he is also visiting capitals of those who have expressed interest in negotiations, e.g. Rome and Paris, but not London. It is not clear what the Russians are up to. More generally, signals are piling up that Saddam Hussein would be prepared to withdraw if there are a few 'adjustments'. The Americans seem publicly firm against this,

*Temporarily
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S. Gray
7/1/2017*

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- Embassies in Kuwait The Americans seem to be manoeuvring in preparation for shutting down their Embassy in Kuwait. They want a deal whereby we all close the Embassies in return for Iraqi agreement to allow diplomats to leave Iraq.
- Sanctions No new developments. You are going to visit the Embargo Surveillance Centre in the Department of Transport.
- Mr. Heath's Mission Mr. Waldegrave should report on whether we have any fresh information about his plans.
- Your talk with the President You might go through the main headings which you intend to raise with the President. I am working on a separate note on this.
- Advice for British Communities at risk from hostilities in the Gulf There is a Cabinet Office note in the folder which recommends that we advise British communities in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Jordan to thin down dependants and non-essential staff, and to lay in supplies. This would not apply to the

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Central Province of Saudi Arabia or to Israel for now. We would emphasise that the advice was purely precautionary. You will want to secure OD(G)'s agreement.

MILITARY

- 7 Armoured Brigade Defence Secretary will want to report on progress with deployment.
- Response to Iraqi use of CW and BW In the light of your reaction, I have instructed the Cabinet Office not to circulate their note. If you think it necessary to say something, I suggest the following:
 - you and Defence Secretary discussed this subject with Cheney.
 - the Americans are averse to using CW, or threatening use of it, to deter the Iraqis.
 - they doubt the Iraqis would try to use CW as a strategic weapon: it is more likely on the battlefield.
 - they intend to try to eliminate the bulk of Iraq's CW capability and the means of delivering it by a pre-emptive strike.
 - they are firmly committed to a conventional response if the Iraqis do use CW.
 - there should be no speculation about possible use of nuclear weapons.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

- You might say that the Foreign Secretary should bring forward notes next week on next steps at the UN and on handling of Embassies in Kuwait. In the longer term, FCO should work on a paper on ways to make progress in the

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Arab/Israel dispute after Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.
Together with MOD, they should also prepare a paper on a
future security system in the Gulf. You will talk
separately to the Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary
next week about any further papers which may be needed,
in the light of your talk with the President.

C.D.P.

C. D. POWELL

17 October 1990

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