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From the Private Secretary

22 October 1990

THE GULF

Brent Scowcroft telephoned me this afternoon, with Jim Baker sitting in his office, to say that the Americans remained very unhappy about the way things were going at the United Nations. They did not think it had been necessary for the Security Council to discuss the Palestinian issue on Friday: at the least, David Hannay could have held off discussion over the weekend, to give them more time to bring the Israelis along, while keeping the focus on the Gulf resolution. I said that, as I had told him on Friday, our perspective was that there had been no alternative to early discussion of the Secretary-General's decision to abandon his Mission. I was certain that David Hannay would not have done this unless he really saw no other way. Moreover, my understanding was that he had moved in very close consultation with Pickering.

Brent Scowcroft said, rather testily, that this was not how Pickering saw it. We were making the Americans lives unnecessarily difficult for them. They were working very hard on Shamir to make some helpful gesture over the Secretary-General's mission. I said that they were not the only ones: the Prime Minister had sent a personal message to Shamir. Brent Scowcroft welcomed this and said he thought we could actually, between us, make some ground with the Israelis. But David Hannay must take a firmer line in resisting pressure for premature discussion of the Palestinian issue. It seemed there was now no hope of getting back to the Gulf resolution until the matter of the Secretary-General's Mission had been resolved. I cautioned against trying to second-guess the person in the chair at the Security Council.

This may well not be fair to David Hannay. But I should report that Scowcroft was distinctly and unusually irritated, and was being audibly egged on by Jim Baker in the background.

Ri Hunter
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I suggest that you give this letter very limited distribution only.

CHARLES POWELL

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