

PRIME MINISTERMEETING OF MINISTERS: THE GULF

You have one of the regular Meetings of Ministers to consider latest developments in the Gulf. The main points you will want to consider are:

DIPLOMATICActivity at the United Nations

Now that the Palestinian resolution has gone through, the way should be clear to return to the further resolution dealing with Iraq/Kuwait and in particular the question of compensation. It is very important not to interrupt further the steadily mounting pressure on Iraq.

At the same time, it is clear that the Americans remain determined to obtain authority from the United Nations for the use of force. They are now arguing in addition that this will be essential in order to obtain Congressional backing. The signs are that they might try to secure a resolution during their Presidency of the Security Council in November. They argue this will be done on a contingency basis, so that it does not give a signal to Saddam Hussein that military action is imminent. The arguments against recourse to the UN for authority to use force are no less strong than they were. But it seems increasingly unlikely that the Americans will allow us to deter them. We ought to be giving some thought to the least damaging form of such a resolution.

Article 51 letter

You handed over to the Amir of Kuwait the draft of the letter agreed with the Americans. The Amir undertook to consider it and let you have any comments, but not to sign it for the time being.

Negotiations

Primakov is back in the Middle East, first in Cairo but going on to Amman and Baghdad. He is evidently continuing to pursue a diplomatic solution.

American views and opinion

You might like to ask Sir Percy Cradock to report his findings from his visit to Washington both on the intelligence front and in terms of American intentions.

Advice to British communities at risk from hostilities in the Gulf

You will want the Foreign Secretary to report on the meeting of Consular Directors of the Twelve (which I think has taken place) and the conclusions to be drawn.

Saudi views

Prince Sultan's press conference was unfortunate, despite subsequent efforts by the Saudis to pull back. Prince Bandar is coming to see you on Monday at his own request. You might ask for views on what you should say to him.

Meeting with President Mitterrand

You want to see President Mitterrand on Saturday and the Gulf is likely to be one of the main subjects discussed. Indications from M. Attali are that Mitterrand expects use of force to be necessary, and is robust in his determination to work closely with us and the Americans. However, he seems determined there should be some specific United Nations backing for the use of force. Are there particular points which you need to make to him?

Iraqi intentions

There have been one or two indicators that Iraq may be

considering withdrawal from a part of Kuwait. You will want to ensure that work is in hand to consider the political and military response we should make in such an eventuality. Would the Kuwaiti Government immediately return to Kuwait? Or would it wait until Iraqi forces had left the whole of the country? Would our own forces move forward? Or would this be too risky without forward air cover? There are quite a number of questions to be addressed here.

Sanctions

There continues to be substantial evidence of breaches or intended breaches of sanctions against Iraq. Reports of Jordanian activity reflect a very uneven pattern: some days virtually no movement at all, others substantial movement of traffic. But both we and the Americans seem to be of one mind that sanctions are unlikely to work within an acceptable timeframe.

MILITARY

CDS's meeting with General Colin Powell

You may like to ask CDS to say something about his meeting with General Powell - bearing in mind that some of what he has to say may not be suitable for this larger group.

Iraqi missiles

You will want to enquire what view was reached on the evidence from satellite imagery that the Iraqis were deploying missiles to their launchers in Western Iraq (it was not clear whether this was with or without warheads). Was this a deliberate provocation towards the Israelis?

C.D.P.
CHARLES POWELL

25 October 1990

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