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From the Private Secretary

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R. Amin
CDS
25/x

26 October 1990

See Hople.

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MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE

You will see from the minutes that there was some discussion at OD(G) this morning of the State Department's request that we should raise the level of attendance at the Military Staff Committee's meeting on 29 October. OD(G) decided, however, to maintain our decision to send Major General Beckett, Head of British Defence Staff, Washington.

I should report that I was telephoned this morning by the French Ambassador to say that the French Government were sending their equivalent of VCDS and would appeal to us to send someone of similar rank as a gesture of solidarity. I explained that we had never been very keen on the concept of the meeting and were determined to avoid any implication that the Military Staff Committee had a role in relation to British (or other) forces in the Gulf. This militated against sending someone from London. Ministers had considered the matter again this morning in response to an inquiry from the Americans, but had decided to maintain our decision. I would, of course, report these representations, but could not hold out any hope of change.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

C. D. POWELL

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