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PRIME MINISTER

TALK WITH PRESIDENT BUSH

The President is likely to telephone you later today for a round-up on the situation in the Gulf.

You might like to start by congratulating him on settling the Budget and ask him about the progress with the Congressional Election Campaign (elections are on Tuesday). You ought also to mention the resignation of Sir Geoffrey Howe, which has been reported quite prominently in the American papers.

You might go on to welcome the excellent personal relationship between Tom King and Secretary Cheney. They are keeping in close touch and you are pleased with the decision that our military planners should join the American planners and work together.

You might then welcome Jim Baker's forthcoming visit, and say that you look forward to a very full discussion with him. You would also hope that you and the President could meet during the CSCE Summit in Paris.

You might go on to deplore Soviet activities in the Gulf and Primakov's attempts to find a negotiated solution. This risks spreading confusion and undermining the resolve of some of the Arab Governments (you have seen a disturbing report of the views of the Saudi Interior Minister). You sent a strongly-worded message to Gorbachev urging him to desist: a copy was sent to General Scowcroft.

You might also mention the visit of Brandt and others to Iraq to discuss hostages. This was a nasty surprise coming so soon after the Europeans agreed not to encourage any further emissaries.

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That might lead on to the main point which you want to make, which is about US reinforcements. You have seen a number of reports that the Americans will be sending extra forces and General Scowcroft has confirmed this to me. (You should not mention the account given by Secretary Cheney to Tom King.)

While you welcome this, you are a little concerned about the implications for timing. How long will it take to deploy the additional forces? Does it not risk bringing us up against

① the closing of the window for military operations in March, in which case we might lose the military option altogether?

② Can we really hold Arab and other international opinion together for that long? Or will we not have to contend with spurious

③ peace proposals and more trouble with the Palestinians? You recognise the need to have sufficient forces in place to guarantee that the military option is successful. But too much delay might become self-defeating. You will want to add that we are ready to help in any way we can, for instance by assisting with transport or by providing more forces within the limits of our resources.

④ *State of our relations in Kuwait*

If the President himself does not raise it, you might ask how

⑤ his thinking has developed on the American Embassy in Kuwait.

We have taken a decision to keep ours there for another month and then review the position. You understand his frustration, but you are anxious that attempts to undertake a relief operation, as has been suggested in the press, might come unstuck and be a propaganda victory for Saddam Hussein. If the purpose was just to demonstrate the Iraqis' refusal to abide by Security Council resolutions that would be fine. But if such an operation were pushed to the point of a military confrontation, it would be very high risk: and would anyway surely be premature, if there were not yet enough forces in place to exercise the military option.

You might add that our respective delegations in New York are in close touch about the way ahead at the United Nations. One

⑥ suggestion we have is to mount a full presentation for the Security Council of the brutalities which are taking place in Kuwait.

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This would have to be conducted by the Kuwaitis themselves and we would want to be sure it was a thoroughly professional job.

① Finally on a unrelated matter, you might say that you very much regret the failure so far to get the European Community to table an offer on agriculture for the GATT negotiations. A further attempt will be made next week but you are not very optimistic. The problem lies entirely with the French and the Germans.

C.D.P.

C.D. POWELL2 November 1990

✓ You will see a note about a brave Brit. in hiding in Kuwait attached: you might mention it to the President.

Also see daily sitrep.

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