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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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MO 6/17/15/1J

JK November 1990

Dear Charles,

IRAQ/KUWAIT

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The Defence Secretary has seen Stephen Wall's letter of 5th November about the draft position on Iraq/Kuwait. He was generally content with the amendments proposed, except for two points.

Mr King accepted the comment on paragraph 7(h) but thought that the revised wording went too far. It would mean that military commanders - who are required to interpret their orders strictly - would have to allocate sufficient troops to deal with what might be several thousands of hostages and refugees. This could significantly impair their ability to conduct military operations which would be intended to regain control of Kuwait (so that we could then help the hostages and refugees). The Defence Secretary would prefer the wording on the lines of:

"Although the first priority is to ensure the success of military operations, planning should include the need to protect and subsequently assist hostages (and other refugees)".

The Defence Secretary agrees that paragraph 9 could be omitted from the paper (although he may include these points in his covering letter to Mr Cheney). He would prefer paragraph 8 on co-ordination with Allies to remain since it includes important messages about trying to get military value from the French and Arab forces (difficult as that might be).

I am enclosing a clean copy of the paper reflecting these changes.

A copy of this letter goes to Stephen Wall (FCO) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Tom Raftery
Jim Webb
(S WEBB)
Private Secretary

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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