

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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From the Private Secretary

15 November 1990

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THE GULF: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Following discussion in OD(G) this morning about the Americans' failure so far to respond to our paper on strategic objectives, I spoke again to General Scowcroft. I explained that Ministers saw some urgency in obtaining American endorsement of our paper, or comments on it, and proceeding from there to joint planning. The Defence Secretary had just returned from a visit to the Gulf and would be putting forward proposals for reinforcement of the British military presence. His colleagues were generally well disposed but felt we needed the assurance that the United Kingdom and the United States were at one about the strategic objectives for our forces, and how they would be implemented.

General Scowcroft said that he had finally been able to discuss our paper with Secretary Baker and Secretary Cheney yesterday. There were a few points on which the American definition of their objectives was not at one with ours, although he did not think that the differences were irreconcilable. He was drafting a reply to my message which he would try to get to me tomorrow. This would set out the differences, together with some ideas on how to deal with them.

I said this would be very welcome. I expected the Prime Minister to raise the matter with the President in Paris on Monday. General Scowcroft said he would ensure the President was briefed.

I am copying this letter to Stephen Wall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Sir Robin Butler.

(C. D. POWELL)

Simon Webb, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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