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*From the Private Secretary*

16 November 1990

*See [unclear]*

POSSIBLE VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE GULF

Thank you for your letter of 15 November setting out the possible programme for a visit by the Prime Minister to the Gulf. This has now been greatly complicated by the indications that the Italians are once again trying to shift the dates of the European Council. Until that is resolved, I do not think we can take matters much further forward, although I do not see why we should once again have to accept a change to the European Council dates.

As to the structure of the visit to the Gulf, the Prime Minister would certainly want to call on King Fahd wherever he is at the time before seeing the Amir of Kuwait.

Perhaps we can have a further word when the matter of the European Council dates is settled.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*C. D. Powell*

C. D. POWELL

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

15 November 1990

Content with  
this outline?

- No - I think the  
initial visit  
to Saudi Arabia should  
NOT be a prelude for

Dear Charles

C 15/11

Possible visit by the Prime Minister to the Gulf

In your letter of 9 November you asked us to consider a possible programme for a visit by the Prime Minister to the Gulf from 14-17 December.

We agree that the priorities for the visit should be Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt. Time constraints would make it impossible to fit in a visit to Oman; though it might just be possible to include a stopover in the UAE (on which see below).

In Saudi Arabia we would hope that, in addition to meetings with King Fahd and the Amir of Kuwait and visits to our own forces, the Prime Minister would be able to fit in a meeting with General Schwarzkopf, the US Commander. This could take place perhaps during a visit to HBQFME in Riyadh. We assume that she would want to spend the best part of a day with British forces in and around Dhahran and to visit a RN ship in the Gulf, from where it would be possible to helicopter on to Bahrain. The programme there would include a call on the Ruler (or, if he is still convalescing in the United States, the Crown Prince) and visits to RAF units at Muharrag. A stopover in Cairo (which need last no more than 5-6 hours) could be fitted in on the return trip. Apart from Saudi Arabia, Egypt is the key Arab member of the coalition against Saddam Hussain; HM Ambassador Cairo recently made a strong recommendation in an entirely separate context that the Prime Minister should find time for a brief visit if she were in the area.

A programme on these lines would look something like this:

Friday 14 December

Late afternoon/early evening

Depart Rome at the conclusion of the European Council (assuming the date does not change)

Saturday 15 December

Early morning Arrive Jedda  
 am Call on the Amir of Kuwait  
 Lunchtime Fly to Riyadh  
 pm Visit HQBFCME. Calls on General  
 Schwarzkopf and General de la  
 Billiere.  
 Early evening Audience with King Fahd\*  
 Overnight Riyadh

\*This part of the programme would have to be rejigged if the King is in Jedda

Sunday 16 December

Early morning Depart Riyadh for Dhahran  
 am Visit British Forces in and around  
 Dhahran  
 ?Call on Governor of Eastern Province,  
 Prince Mohammed bin Fahd  
 Mid-afternoon Helicopter to RN ship in the Gulf  
 Early evening Helicopter on to Bahrain.  
 Overnight Bahrain.

Monday 17 December

am Call on the Ruler (or Crown Prince) of  
 Bahrain  
 Visit RAF units at Muharraq  
 Early afternoon Depart for Cairo  
 Late afternoon Arrive Cairo  
 Meeting with President Mubarak  
 Late evening Depart for London  
 Midnight (approx) Arrive London



It would be necessary to discuss the main elements of this programme with the governments concerned - and particularly the Saudi leadership - albeit on a highly restricted basis at a fairly early stage. It is possible the Saudis would be hesitant about any suggestion that the Prime Minister's first major meeting in the Kingdom should be with the Kuwaitis. But this need not be an insurmountable problem, and matters would be eased considerably if King Fahd were in Jedda at the time. In any event the programme allows for a certain degree of flexibility in splitting the Prime Minister's time between Jedda and Riyadh.

It might be possible to fit in a short visit to Abu Dhabi en route from Bahrain to Cairo. But the UAE has already received considerable attention from British Ministers this year, and our initial view is that a visit would probably over-strain the programme. In any event a meeting in the early afternoon might not appeal to Shaikh Zayed who traditionally prefers to receive visitors in the evening. The same arguments apply to Oman, which would only be possible if Bahrain were dropped. That would seem illogical given the greater RAF presence now at Muharraq than at Thumrait/Seeb.

The above reflects preliminary discussions with the MOD.

*Yours,*  
*Stephen Wall*  
(J S Wall)  
Private Secretary

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