

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO
Cabinet Office

Jim Robert

VENICE SUMMIT: GULF SHIPPING

In the light of your talk this morning with Rodric Braithwaite and David Ratford I enclose a draft message to Attali incorporating the proposed text on Iran/Iraq and Gulf Shipping. We have deleted "immediately all hostilities in the region of the Gulf and ", as you suggested. We have also deleted "littoral" in the following line: it appears in the relevant Security Council Resolution, but the text is more effective without it. If one of our partners wishes to argue for it to be put back, they can do so.

If you agree with the line of this draft we will prepare a separate slightly different message to the Americans.

John Fretwell

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DRAFT TEXT OF A MESSAGE FROM SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG
TO MONSIEUR J ATTALI

You will be aware of recent public statements by President Reagan that at Venice he intends to raise the question of the protection of shipping in the Gulf and no doubt you will have been considering how to respond. We believe it is a question which could create difficulties at least for some of the participants. It will therefore require careful handling if it is not to divert attention from economic issues or, worse, lead to public divisions.

For our part we are already making a useful contribution through the presence, since 1980, of the Royal Navy's Armilla Patrol, the role of which we have recently enhanced. We would be prepared, in addition, to agree to regular consultations among interested partners and to join in low profile cooperation on the ground, for example exchanges of information. But we could not contemplate anything which approaches joint or integrated operations. No doubt others at Venice will be able to point to the individual contributions they might make in their own way.

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Given the public expectations which have been aroused it will be essential to find language, either for a common statement or alternatively for agreed press guidance, which will cover our respective positions and meet our varying domestic political requirements. Our preliminary view is that the solution will be to draw extensively on previous statements on this subject, notably at the Economic Summit in London in 1984, as well as on relevant Security Council Resolutions (e.g., numbers 540, 552 and 582).

Such a statement might read as follows [a- b attached_7.

The above draft has not been shown to the Prime Minister but I believe that she would be able to accept language in that sense. It would be very helpful to know your own reactions. If you - and our American colleagues to whom I am also ^{writing} ~~addressing~~ ~~a similar message~~ are likewise attracted by it I would be encouraged to circulate it informally as a contribution to our discussions in Venice next week.