

TO 1261

MR POWELL

*Spoke*  
*EDP 17/xi*  
 CC: Sir Robin Butler  
 Mr Appleyard

MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR BRITISH FORCES MIDDLE EAST *units esp.*

Would you please refer to the Defence Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister of 14 December. The proposal is that this should be discussed in the margins of tomorrow's presentation to OPD(G) in the Ministry of Defence. The Ministers present for this will be the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, the Energy Secretary and the Attorney General. However, other Ministers have an interest in the medical support question: the Health Secretary, the Scottish Secretary (marginally), the Chief Secretary, Treasury and the Lord President. All have had copies of the minute. The Defence Secretary wishes to announce the measures he proposes by Written Answer tomorrow. Time is therefore short.

2. I have discussed handling with the Cabinet Secretary, who has asked me to check with you, and also with the Private Offices of the non-attending Ministers, whether the Prime Minister and those other Ministers are content. If so, the matter can be left for resolution in the margins of the presentation. If not, the Cabinet Secretary suggests that all interested Ministers should assemble at 12.15 in the Defence Secretary's office in MOD for a short meeting to take a decision.

3. I should be grateful to know whether you are content with this mode of proceeding.

*WDR*  
*mes*

W D REEVES

Cabinet Office

16 December 1990

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