

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING OF OPD(G): THE GULF

My efforts to cancel tomorrow's meeting of OPD(G) have failed. Sir Robin Butler insists that it is necessary, to ensure that you are briefed up to the eye-balls on the Gulf before you go to Washington. There is an inordinate amount of paper in the folder, much of it repetitive and not all of it very relevant in the short-term at least. I think you can actually despatch the real business quite quickly. The main items are as follows.

Expulsion of Suspect Iraqis from the United Kingdom

There are 8 Iraqi intelligence agents in the Iraqi Embassy: and 63 Baath party activists loose in the United Kingdom. They could be extremely dangerous in the event of a war, particularly by involvement in terrorist activity (or even by using hand-portable CW or BW - although this is unlikely). We have to get rid of them, but should do so in a way which poses least risk to our own Embassy in Baghdad. The proposal is to move against them, by expelling them on 3/4 January. By then our Embassy's functions in relation to the British community in Iraq will have been much reduced. It would be better to avoid arrests, in case of retaliation against our people.

It seems the obvious commonsense thing to do, and I doubt much discussion is needed.

Current International Situation

The Foreign Secretary will report orally on a number of developments, most of which you are familiar with and none of which require action at present.

Your visit to the United States

Again the Foreign Secretary will give you his views (and has two further opportunities to do so during the day: at the briefing meeting of the visit and during his bilateral with you). There is also the note by officials on their visit to Washington last week which you have already seen.

There are really three points of action:

- to establish whether there is agreement on the revised text of the strategic objectives attached to the Cabinet Office note;
- to ask CDS to tell you the four or five crucial points you need to put to the President;
- to run over the main aspects of the Gulf crisis which you will need to cover in your talks with the President. There is an excellent note by Percy Cradock.

You might also use the opportunity to find out where on earth MoD have got to on BW immunisation: are the white mice still keeling over?

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Israeli Policy

There is also a JIC paper on how the Israelis are likely to behave (although we have not actually received it yet): and a note by the FCO on the Arab/Israel problem which is frankly for the birds just at the moment. I would not devote a great deal of time to the latter aspect at least.

I hope this brief note is some guide to finding your way through the quagmire of paper inside.

C.D.P.

(C. D. POWELL)

18 December 1990

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