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From the Private Secretary

19 December 1990

Dear Stephen,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH HM AMBASSADOR BAGHDAD

The Prime Minister had a brief meeting this morning with our Ambassador in Baghdad, whom he thanked warmly and handsomely for the tremendous performance which he and the Embassy staff have put up since August.

Much of the conversation was about conditions in Baghdad and the likely reaction of Saddam Hussain as the 15 January deadline came closer. I think you already know Mr. Walker's views on this.

The other main point on which the Prime Minister sought Mr. Walker's views was the future of the Embassy. Mr. Walker said that much would depend on what the Americans decided to do. If they pulled out, we should certainly go as well. Equally if they decided to remain, it would be difficult for our Embassy to go. But the consular workload should be considerably diminished from early January which would enable us to thin out staff: and the Iraqis were anyway likely to retaliate if we decided to expel any members of their Embassy here. The Prime Minister said he assumed Mr. Walker would be reflecting on this over the Christmas period. If he had any further thoughts, he should let us know.

CHARLES POWELL

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