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*Content*

*Prime Minister*

*Agree to give authority  
for dropping this Bill  
on a country-by-country basis?*

Prime Minister

GULF CRISIS: CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EMERGENCY LEGISLATION

*CAF  
10/7/81*

Officials in a number of Departments, under Cabinet Office chairmanship, have been considering draft legislation which might be needed for the Gulf Crisis.

There is a precedent in the 1982 Falklands crisis. At that time a draft Bill and Regulations were prepared but never used. Much of the content of both of those drafts would be useful this time, although there are obvious differences in the situation.

The 1982 draft regulations dealt with the broad categories of:

- requisitioning and compensation;
- navigation instructions;
- drivers hours;
- trade with hostile states;
- nationals of hostile states;
- offences, penalties and police powers.

Some of these powers might not be needed in the present circumstances but other new ones may, eg;

- provision to ease the position of United Kingdom firms under contractual obligation in, or in relation to, Iraq (especially in respect of performance bonds for which there is probably a United Kingdom liability of some tens of millions of pounds);
- additional powers to enable the Government to make special defensive provisions at places which may be at risk of terrorist attack;

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- alteration to, or suspension of, some of the regulations under which coroners operate (in the case of large numbers of casualties returning here), and cremation requirements.

Departments have been asked to give urgent consideration to identifying any precise requirements.

The Home Office co-ordinated the 1982 exercise and we have in any case a standing obligation to keep general emergency legislation for use in war at a state of readiness.

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on the Gulf, under Sir Robin Butler's chairmanship, concluded on Friday that it would be prudent to have a Bill and Regulations fully prepared by 14 January. I agree with officials that we cannot afford to leave this kind of preparation to the last minute even if, in the event, it is not needed.

Since there is a wide measure of agreement amongst Departments I hope you will agree that authority is given for the drafting of a Bill on a contingency basis.

Copies of this go to Cabinet colleagues, the Law Officers, the Chief Whip and Sir Robin Butler.

K.S.

18 December 1990

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