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Ref. A091/08

PRIME MINISTER

cc Sir Percy Cradock
Mr Appleyard

OPD(G): 3 January

Item 1: Prime Minister's visit to Camp David

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You may wish to give colleagues a (necessarily selective) review of the Gulf aspects of your talks with President Bush, Vice-President Quayle and Mr Baker. You might brief them in particular on the firmness of US resolve, the President's assessment of US Congressional and public opinion, US analysis of Saddam Hussain's intentions, the American perception of Soviet, European and other allied governments' roles and any insight into Israeli intentions. If asked about the timing of the military option, you could confine yourself to saying that no final decisions have been made, we will be consulted in advance and it is clear that we must be ready at any time from 15 January (although, as OPD(G) know, the land battle would not be in the first stages of the operation). The next round of the UK/US talks is scheduled to take place on 7 January in Washington (subject to confirmation). The discussions will include reaching final agreement on strategic and military objectives, collateral damage from attacks on NBC installations, US plans for consulting allies before operations begin and responses to partial and full Iraqi withdrawal.

Item 2: Current international situation

2. You might invite the Foreign Secretary to brief colleagues on the preparations for the European Foreign Ministers' meeting on 4 January (technically an EPC rather than an FAC). The



Foreign Secretary has spoken to Mr Baker, Herr Genscher, M. Dumas, Mr Van den Broek and Mr Poos and intends to consult Mr Baker again today or tomorrow. French and German attitudes remain a potential source of concern.

3. In a BBC interview Mr Poos twice mentioned the possibility that he might travel to Baghdad but he now appears to accept that at most there might be a Poos/Tariq Aziz meeting in Europe though Mr Baker expressed concern about this idea when he spoke to the Foreign Secretary on 30 December. It will be important to ensure that the EPC meeting should not undermine UN Resolutions or the position of Mr Baker if his meeting with Tariq Aziz takes place (no firm news on the prospects). Mr Baker has accepted the Foreign Secretary's proposal that he (Mr Baker) should contact Herr Genscher and Mr Poos before the EPC meeting to underline the importance of a firm stand. The main message to Tariq Aziz would still be that if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait it would not be attacked, but if it did not go, force would be used. Mr Baker was also attracted by the Foreign Secretary's idea that the EC Presidency, the troika or the Presidency plus France and the UK (as Permanent Members of the Security Council) should summon Iraqi Ambassadors at Foreign Minister level to give them the right message.

4. Mr Baker is also looking at the possibility of reviving the proposal for a meeting of the Five Foreign Ministers. The feasibility, and utility, of a meeting would depend largely on the Soviet attitude. Mr Baker is considering recommending to President Bush that he send a message to Mr Gorbachev, or speak to him on the telephone, to sound him out on present Soviet thinking and indeed on the current status of Mr Shevardnadze. Mr Baker suggested to the Foreign Secretary that the Five could meet amongst themselves or invite Tariq Aziz to meet them. The Foreign Secretary will know the latest position by the time of OPD(G).



5. You may want to remind colleagues of your visit to the Gulf (6-9 January) and the Foreign Secretary's visit to other Gulf States, Jordan and Turkey (scheduled for 11-15 January). Briefing is in hand for your visit. You might ask the Foreign Secretary about the present position on the distribution of respirators agreed at the OPD(G) meeting on 13 December and on consular advice. The Foreign Secretary's visit may be affected by the timing of any debate in Parliament. The likeliest date for the latter would be 14 January, which could also affect your visit to Paris, and the FCO are preparing draft speeches.

6. You might mention the arrangements for strengthening domestic opinion which you agreed with the Foreign Secretary on 28 December. These include briefing for Ministers, more extensive use of the Amnesty International report, briefing to newspaper editors, other party leaders, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mrs Thatcher, Mr Heath and selected backbenchers.

Item 3: British Embassy, Baghdad

7. You might invite the Foreign Secretary to introduce his minute of 31 December. The minute carefully balances the pros and cons of pulling out the remaining members of the Embassy at the end of the current thinning-out process (down to 5 or 6 by tomorrow) and reserves a decision until next week when the intentions of the US and European governments may be clearer. Action is in hand separately on the expulsion of Iraqis (8 diplomats, 63 non-diplomats) on 3-4 January, which was agreed at OPD(G) on 19 December.

8. You may wish to conclude the discussion by stressing that if anyone is to remain in Baghdad after 15 January he must be a volunteer and inviting the Foreign Secretary to come back to OPD(G) colleagues next week for a final decision either by correspondence or at OPD(G) on 10 January, in the light of the plans of the US and European partners.



Item 4: Current Military Situation

9. You may wish to invite Mr Hamilton to begin by saying a word about BW immunisation. The current position is that the decision has been announced and has received a good press. All the batches of anthrax vaccine have been cleared so that we have a full amount: the MoD were in touch with you on the medical safety procedures. Other governments, apart from the Saudis, have reacted reasonably well to our decision. Mr Hamilton will want to give some of the background to current Saudi dissatisfaction with the amount which has been allocated to them, based largely on disinformation from Porton International. The Foreign Secretary may want to comment on the Saudi angle.

10. Mr Hamilton might also bring you up-to-date on the call-up of reserves. The programme has gone well. Some 400 Army reservists have been called up, of which only a part (perhaps 200) will be deployed, plus the RAAF 4626 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. You might ask Mr Hamilton whether further call-ups may be necessary.

11. Another topic which Mr Hamilton may raise is handling of Iraqi POWs. The MoD and FCO are working on joint plans for handling POWs, and are consulting the Red Cross, the ICRC and other governments, especially on medical support for POW casualties. A particular problem is that a further 2,000 British troops may be needed to handle our own initial capture of Iraqi POWs.

12. Mr Hamilton has been considering, and is likely to raise, the US request for a carrier group to be sent to the Red Sea for embargo enforcement duties to enable a US carrier group to be deployed for offensive action. The Chiefs of Staff are in favour. You may like to assure yourself that a carrier group would be best fitted for the role and establish how long it will take to deploy to the Red Sea.

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13. Lastly, Mr Hamilton may raise Rules of Engagement (ROE) covering rapid reaction by the Joint Commander in the case of an Iraqi pre-emptive attack, and dormant ROE for an offensive. He will undertake to let you have a minute on the subject.

14. You might ask the Chief of the Defence Staff to brief on the present MoD assessment of Iraqi dispositions and intentions. The CDS is also briefed to raise the current situation on the sealift of British forces and Tornado deployment.

Cabinet on 10 January

15. The next meeting of OPD(G) is on 10 January. For Cabinet on 10 January you will want arrangements to be made to secure formal Cabinet authority for you, in consultation with the US Government, to commit British troops to enforce implementation of UN Resolutions and Government objectives if Saddam Hussain does not comply fully. It would be helpful if you would confirm whether you want an FCO paper to be the basis for discussion or whether you would prefer an oral presentation by the Foreign and Defence Secretaries. There are security advantages in avoiding the circulation of a paper but, to forestall any criticism that Cabinet are being asked to take a momentous decision on the basis of inadequate information, you may want to consider whether the compliance of any members of Cabinet needs to be ensured in advance (eg the Secretary of State for Environment as a previous Defence Secretary) and, if so, how.

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R.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

2 January 1991