



Mr. King's briefings of Mr. O'Neill + Mr. Campbell have been helpful + provided good support. They should continue. Content for briefings to Sir A. Steel + Mr. Ashdown to continue. I would prefer radiating briefings but I cannot do that for Mr. King to join me if necessary. Telephone 071-21 82111/3 if Mr. King would brief w/s Howell + Bates + Sir Geoffrey

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
 Telephone 071-21 82111/3

Prime Minister

MO 6/17/15/1J

3 January 1991 / S!

I am not sure what you would feel about X.

Dear Charles

It would seem to me to be rather overloading the circuit: & indeed be unprecedented. Agreed to stick to individual

GULF: BRIEFINGS

The Defence Secretary saw your letter of 28th December to Richard Gozney which covered, inter alia, the programme for briefing the Opposition leadership and back benchers in the event of hostilities in the Gulf.

The Defence Secretary has kept Mr O'Neill and Mr Campbell regularly in touch during the force deployments to the Gulf and we have got into the habit of letting them know in advance of announcements (eg in the last week on Reservists and Biological Warfare vaccinations). This has generally been followed by helpful and supportive comments to the press. He would, accordingly, plan to continue with such briefings; although neither are Privy Councillors they readily accept confidences and we have not had any difficulties on this score. Mr King also gave a military briefing in November to Mr Ashdown and Sir David Steel on Privy Council terms.

Good.

Against this background, it occurs to the Defence Secretary that if there is sufficient military content in the Prime Minister's briefings for Mr Kinnoch and Mr Ashdown, it might be sensible if he was to join the Prime Minister and for Messrs O'Neill and Campbell to be invited too. Indeed, a three to three briefing including the Foreign Secretary might be helpful and economical in time.

X

Separately, the Defence Secretary is ready to brief Mr David Howell and Mr Michael Mates, and would also plan to speak to Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith.

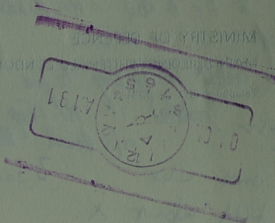
As for timing, with a debate on the 15th in prospect, we would have it in mind to brief slightly ahead so that we can cover areas that would not be appropriate to go over on the floor of the House.

Yours sincerely

Janet Binstead

(MISS J R BINSTED)
 Private Secretary

Sir Charles Powell KCMG
 10 Downing Street



[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

[Handwritten signature or name in blue ink.]

[Faint printed text, possibly a footer or reference code.]

[Faint printed text at the bottom right corner.]