

PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTER

DEFENCE

Bernard tells me he has been telephoned by a journalist from The Times this evening, who read him over a story to the effect that a small informal group of Ministers has been established, led by you and including the Defence Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor, Alan Clark and William Waldegrave to review our defence policy and produce radical recommendations for a future defence posture based on the "projection force". The Times intend to run the story tomorrow. The internal evidence points I am afraid to Alan Clark being the source: Bernard said The Times as good as admitted it.

It would be pretty odd if the Government was not thinking in a general way about our future defence requirements in the present situation. You set out our approach in the House this afternoon. We have nothing to add to that. He would refuse to confirm or deny the existence of any group of Ministers or defence review.

CDP

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(C. D. POWELL)

30 January 1990

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