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CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

IRAQ/KUWAIT

Just a few points of interest from this morning's telegrams.

President Bush/King Hussein 

I attach the full reporting telegram from the FCO of that meeting. It adds little to the read-out I gave you last night but it is interesting that President Bush thought it worth while debriefing President Mubarak straight after that meeting.

UK Residents in Kuwait

The cloud is still there, but less menacing than it was yesterday. Our Embassy and the US have put out broadcasts cancelling yesterday's advice and are now advising the community to stay at home. It is clear from Iraqi meetings with the diplomatic corps in Kuwait that they are trying to drive a wedge between the UK and US residents on one hand and those of the other Western powers on the other. My assessment, with which Robin Butler agrees, is that the Iraqis still plan to use the bargaining lever which the foreign residents provide but do not yet have a clear plan about how to use it. Yesterday's move probably reflected instructions from Baghdad but the Iraqis found it administratively impossible to carry those instructions out on the ground.

Action in the UN

US State Department have urged caution about an emergency Security Council meeting on evacuation of foreign residents. Their fear is that some UN delegations will be unsound and that a resolution could in any case be counter productive with Saddam Hussein. We are continuing to press the UN Secretary General to do what he can with the Iraqis but indications are that the Iraqis have already rejected the idea of a personal emissary from Perez de Cuellar. FCO are continuing informal consultations about the possibility of a UN convoy to evacuate all foreign nationals.

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De Cuellar has issued helpful clarification of his earlier remarks on the use of Article 51 to enforce sanctions. In brief, what he now says is, provided the use of the word "blockade" is avoided, the action being taken is legal.



DOMINIC MORRIS

17 August 1990

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