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FILE KK  
29(a-c)  
C/Foreign/Iraq  
Meeting Record  
Subject McMaster  
bc PC

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

23 August 1990

IRAQ/KUWAIT: MEETING OF MINISTERS

The Prime Minister held a meeting this morning with the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Energy Secretary, the Attorney General and the Minister of State Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Waldegrave), to discuss the latest developments in the Gulf crisis. The Chief of the Defence Staff and Sir Percy Cradock were also present. This letter summarises the main action points.

UN Security Council Resolution on Enforcement of Sanctions

The meeting had before it the text of the draft Resolution in UKMIS New York tel. no. 1061. The Attorney General raised a drafting point relating to operative paragraph one, recommending commas after the word "shipping" in the fourth line and "destinations" in the fifth line, to avoid any ambiguity.

The Foreign Secretary reported that the Americans hoped to achieve a positive vote on the draft resolution in the course of today, having agreed with the Soviet Union that it would not be implemented until 2200z on Friday 24 August. But there were still doubts about the position of some of the non-Permanent Members of the Security Council. There would be intensive lobbying during the day.

The Prime Minister drew attention to the way in which the United States had changed the ROE for their naval forces in the Gulf area over the past two days, in relation to the changing prospects of securing the passage of the UN Security Council Resolution. We had had to follow suit. This was undesirable and unfair to the Commanding Officers of USN and RN ships. It should not happen again. Her strong view on this should be brought to the attention of the White House. I will take action on this.

Aid to Jordan

It was noted that the Commission were proposing urgent assistance to Jordan from the Community budget, whereas we had argued for national contributions. We should continue to maintain this position at the forthcoming meeting of Political

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Directors of the Twelve, and argue for those countries which were not contributing to the multi-national force in the Gulf to play the major part in helping Jordan and Turkey.

British Citizens in Iraq and Kuwait

The Foreign Secretary reported that the Embassy in Amman would be trying to persuade the Jordanians to re-open their border to let through the convoy of British Embassy dependants which had left Baghdad earlier this morning.

The question was also raised whether the Jordanian action in closing the Jordan/Iraq border applied to lorry traffic going from Jordan into Iraq in breach of UN sanctions.

It was noted that representatives of the United Nation's Secretary General were in Baghdad to discuss the question of foreign citizens with the Iraqi Government, but had not made any progress.

The Attorney General was invited to ensure that the argument that we would hold individual Iraqi's accountable for any maltreatment of British citizens in Iraq and Kuwait could be legally sustained.

International Committee of the Red Cross

The Minister of State Foreign Office reported that, following the Prime Minister's strictures and his own visit to Geneva, he believed that the ICRC would bend all its efforts to trying to help foreign citizens in Iraq and Kuwait. The Prime Minister directed that we should give particular prominence to the case of the British family in Kuwait, who had been taken away at gun point with their baby. We should ask the ICRC to intervene in this specific case and draw the widest possible public attention to it as an example of Iraq's inhuman conduct.

The Minister of State Foreign Office reported that he had also visited the United Nations' Human Rights Commission and encouraged them to pass a condemnatory resolution on Iraq's behaviour, as they had in the case of the massacre in Tiananmen Square. It was agreed that maximum publicity should be given to this also.

Helpline

The Foreign Secretary reported on his visit to the Helpline headquarters, which had been organised by Mr. Robert Hayward M.P. The FCO would provide some modest funds for the service. The Prime Minister said she would try to arrange a visit there herself.

Embassies in Kuwait

It was noted with satisfaction that even those EC countries whose citizens were being allowed to leave Iraq and Kuwait had agreed to keep open their Embassies in Kuwait after the Iraqi deadline for closure of 24 August.

Despatch of Additional British Forces to the Gulf

The proposals for despatch of additional British forces to the Gulf set out in the Defence Secretary's minute of 22 August to the Prime Minister were agreed and will be announced by the Defence Secretary at a press conference this morning. It was noted that the additional Tornado GRI aircraft would be stationed in Bahrain.

Enforcement Action in Support of the United Nations Embargo

The meeting considered the Defence Secretary's undated minute on enforcement action in support of the United Nations embargo. The Attorney General endorsed points (a) to (h) in the annex to that minute, but raised questions about the final paragraph in relation to proportionality. It was agreed that these would be further discussed between the Attorney General and the Defence Secretary and a report made to the next meeting. The Prime Minister urged caution in the use of boarding parties.

Longer-Term Prospects

The Foreign Secretary underlined the importance of ensuring that the United Kingdom was fully involved in any planning conducted by the United States for possible military action to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. We must not find ourselves confronted with proposals for such action, in which we would inevitably be involved, at short notice. It seemed unlikely, however, that the Americans would contemplate such action before their mechanised divisions arrived in theatre in early October. It was agreed that we should take every opportunity to keep in close touch with American thinking. General Powell, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs, should be encouraged to visit London. Our own Commander-in-Chief was likely to meet the American Commander of CENTCOM in the Gulf shortly. The Prime Minister would probably see the President in New York at the end of September.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence), John Neilson (Department of Energy), Juliet Wheldon (Law Officers' Department) and Len Appleyard (Cabinet Office).

(C. D. POWELL)

Simon Gass, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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