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From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

The Gulf

① Have mentioned  
the F. O. Liaison  
Unit - no Robert  
Hayward's help

② Falklands, in an effort  
to get details from P.O.  
legal advice about our  
veto to the extent to  
make us feel <sup>S.C. permission</sup>  
to use force

1. I attach the Foreign Secretary's  
report on his visit: and some  
telegrams.

2. We hope to bring out another  
plane-load of women & children tonight  
by BA (arriving Gatwick at 0600).

3. Another bus convoy should have left  
Kuwait this morning: no laws yet.

4. The Sanctions Committee is meeting  
this afternoon, mainly on the issue of foodstuffs.

C.D.?



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ce/c  
Prime Minister

PM/90/061

PRIME MINISTER

Re Foreign Secretary's report on his visit to the Gulf.

The Gulf: August 31 to September 5 Cdr.

1. The Arab component of the coalition against Iraqi aggression is not gaining recruits but is holding up well. Thanks to the prompt response of the Americans and British the Gulf States have recovered from their initial panic and I found them all in good shape. King Fahd was serene as well as friendly. Several of them are of importance to us, but the leadership comes from the Saudis. The political opinions of the other GCC states are secondary. They will all need constant reassurance, which we must continue to provide, that the Western component of the coalition will hold steady. Their main concern is with the politicking of their fellow Arabs, in order of importance Jordan, Yemen, PLO, Tunisia - Libya and Mauritania being discounted. It is hard to describe the atmosphere created by the ceaseless air journeys and telephone conversations which fill the hours of the Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers. In their amazing palaces exhausted men talk for hours and hours about the conversations (clearly often mythical) which they had with other Arabs days, months or years ago. Their advice to their brothers was always right and always ignored. The Saudis in particular are concerned about the weakening effect which all this activity has on the pressures against Saddam Hussein. For his part

/King Hussein

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King Hussein regards his diplomatic activity as the best way of getting Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait without war. He will tell Saddam Hussein in Baghdad tonight or tomorrow that annexation must end and the hostages be sent home, but after that his ideas are a fuzzy muddle. He will not grasp the reality, well articulated now by the Saudis, that withdrawal and restoration of the Kuwaiti Government must be accomplished before there can be discussion of other items on the Arab agenda - otherwise the Arabs will be accepting lower international standards than the rest of the world. Jordan is getting into a terrible economic mess and there needs to be much more discussion both on what they are doing to comply with sanctions and what help they can get if they do.

2. The Gulf States are not much interested in sanctions. They agree with them of course, but do not in their hearts believe they will by themselves be enough. In this they are probably right because of:

- a. Food
- b. Iran

There is of course strong though veiled interest in the military option. The Saudis (though not the Kuwaitis or Bahrainis) accept that the time is not right for this, partly for practical military reasons, partly because it must be right to time and organise any such action to minimise the disintegrating effect on the anti-Iraqi coalition. Hence King Fahd's insistence to me on the need for Security Council action, though in the last resort he did not want the Soviet Union to be able to

/block

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block what action was necessary. It seems to me that the best hope for a peaceful outcome compatible with our aims lies in sanctions plus the perceived threat of military action. Whether Saddam Hussein could survive Iraqi withdrawal is much debated - King Fahd thinks not, other qualified observers think yes.

3. On the answer to this last point depends in part the result of the longer term thinking about security now beginning. The Jordanians think it inconceivable that foreign forces could stay without putting in danger their host governments. They and the Yemenis are very conscious of "The Street", and the dangers of ignoring public opinion particularly on the Palestine question. The Saudis say now that foreign forces should withdraw once the immediate crisis is resolved. But I doubt myself if this will be their view if Saddam Hussein survives even as a defeated and bedraggled dictator given his future capability. I was interested in how you handled this point in your interview with David Frost. We may well find ourselves invited to join in a permanent system of deterrence in the Gulf, and would surely do so if conditions were right.

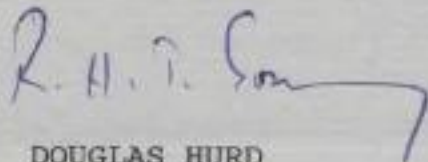
4. More immediately both Prince Saud and James Baker have now asked that we should send troops in some form or other to the Gulf. As I said originally, I believe that sending troops is psychologically and politically quite different from sending ships and aircraft. That is of course why we were asked to do so. You and Tom King are no doubt measuring the possibilities. It will be a major decision.

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5. I am copying this minute to Tom King and John Wakeham.

*for*   
DOUGLAS HURD  
(Dictated by the Foreign Secretary on his way back to London)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
5 September 1990

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