

23(A-E)

PRIME MINISTER

THE GULF: MEETING OF MINISTERS

You have a meeting of Ministers this morning to consider the latest developments over the Gulf. Mr Waldegrave will represent the Foreign Secretary (who is in Tokyo, and en route for Moscow).

The main issues for discussion are on the defence side. You will want to leave adequate time for them.

The items which you will want to cover are:

DIPLOMATIC

- 2 plus 4
- Helsinki Summit. This went as well as could be expected, although the Russians are still reluctant to admit the existence of a military option: and are not very helpful on withdrawal of their military advisers. The Foreign Secretary might be encouraged to pursue this latter point with Shevardnadze in Moscow.

The general European response in NATO to Jim Baker's briefing was strong on words and short on deeds. They all shy away from even contemplating a military option.

- Sanctions on foodstuffs. The Permanent Five members of the UN Sanctions Committee have agreed a satisfactory working paper. Indians
- Request from the Amir. The Attorney has circulated a draft request from the Amir to cover the use of force if necessary to remove the Iraqis from Kuwait. If acceptable to colleagues, the next step is to discuss it with the Americans.
- Aid to countries implementing sanctions. We need to tell the Americans in due course how much we are prepared to

9

contribute.

- Refugees. Mrs Chalker travels out to Jordan today, taking relief supplies. She will make recommendations for further help on her return. It seems from press reports that the situation is beginning to improve. Meanwhile we are urging the UN Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative and urging the UN itself to mount an appeal for funds, focusing particularly on countries which are not contributing much in other ways.
- Hostages. Conditions for British citizens still in Kuwait, many of them in hiding, are becoming increasingly difficult. We shall need to consider what advice to give them i.e. whether they should now give themselves up (never a very palatable piece of advice to give). It depends in part what advice other EC countries and the US intend to give.
- Measures against Iraqis in the UK. The Foreign Office and Home Office have been tasked to make recommendations for Friday's meeting on possible measures against the Iraqi Embassy and other Iraqis in the UK. Particular attention will need to be given to the timing of such measures.

DEFENCE

- The main issue is the sending of additional British forces to the Gulf. You have separate papers on this. The Defence Secretary has now steeled himself to a recommendation (attached): extra Harrier, plus ground forces somewhere between an armoured recce regiment (of 1,000) and an armoured brigade (of 7,500-10,000). He joins the Foreign Secretary in urging that the decision be taken to full OD or Cabinet. We must decide this week or we shall look hesitant - indeed there are signs that we are losing our strong standing with American opinion for our prompt and rigorous initial response.
- You might also discuss interdiction of aircraft thought to be breaking sanctions. The first step would be for

SECRET

- 3 -

countries concerned to deny them permission for overflights.

The next meeting is set for Friday 14 September.

C.A.P.

Charles Powell

11 September 1990

c: Gulf (MJ)

SECRET