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PRIME MINISTER

GULF CRISIS: MINISTERIAL MEETING

You have your usual meeting of Ministers on the Gulf crisis tomorrow morning, before OD.

In addition to the normal review of developments, on which I will do you a note in the morning, there are three specific items of business which need to be discussed.

Additional British Forces for the Gulf

This is covered in briefing in the OD folder. You will want to make sure that your colleagues in the smaller group are prepared to go along with sending an armoured brigade, before you go to OD. The Attorney will be hard to convince. You will need to deploy the written advice which you will receive from those who attended this afternoon's meeting.

Advice to British Citizens in Kuwait

You will want to read the attached Cabinet Office note. It concludes that clandestine assistance is not practical and that contacts with the Kuwait Resistance could endanger the lives of British citizens. The prospects of negotiating a safe passage out of Iraq and Kuwait through someone like Prince Sadruddin are not good, but should be tried. Meanwhile the best we can do is keep our people briefed on developments over the BBC World Service, and advise them to remain where they are but not to resist arrest (although the final choice must rest with them).

Assistance for the families of hostages in Iraq and Kuwait

Again there is a Cabinet Office note. The arrangements for handling hostage families are going quite well, but there are three recommendations for further action:

- a. to establish a Ministerial Sub-group with particular responsibilities for the families of hostages;

b

- b. to set up a Gulf Families Support Centre, to be co-located with the FCO Emergency Unit, to provide families with information (on a freephone) and help dependants cope with problems on social security, etc.
- c. put out an information pamphlet to all dependants of hostages.

These seem sensible recommendations.

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C. D. POWELL

13 September 1990

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MR POWELL

c Mr Appleyard

Advice to British Citizens in Kuwait

I should like to offer one comment on the paper circulated to OD(G).

2. I have some unease about the Government's positively advising British citizens in Kuwait that they should remain where they are but should not resist arrest (paragraph 15 d). My worry is that, if the Government positively advises UK nationals to remain where they are in Kuwait and some of them subsequently get killed, the Government would be blamed retrospectively for this advice and perhaps even actions would be brought against it. My preference therefore would be to take the actions at 15 a, b, c and e - ie take action to keep them informed and help them but leave the final decision to them without offering positive advice to stay where they are.

3. I have discussed this point with Mr Appleyard but other Departments involved in preparing the paper thought that the Government should give advice in the form of paragraph 15 d and it has therefore been left in for Ministerial consideration tomorrow.

R.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

13 September 1990