

PRIME MINISTER

GULF BUSINESS NOTE

I attach a rather elaborate Gulf Business Note from Robin Butler. In essence it lists a lot of papers which he wants to have prepared and put to OD(G) over the next few weeks. They are:

- i) ways of deterring Saddam Hussein from using CW/BW. This is already written and is attached. The paper illustrates the difficulties which we face at present because of the need for secrecy: it takes no account of your and the Defence Secretary's discussion with Secretary Cheney at which these issues were fully considered, or of the American plan to strike pre-emptively at Iraq's CW facilities.
- ii) US military objectives and priorities. This cannot fully and accurately be written without considerably expanding the circle of those who are in the picture.
- iii) The implications of a wider range of allied objectives, including destruction of Iraq's NBC facilities and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.
- iv) A full presentation by MoD on the military scenario for hostilities against Iraq.
- v) Presentation of UK policy.
- vi) A regional security structure for the Gulf post-Iraqi withdrawal.
- vii) Prospects for an Arab/Israel settlement.
- viii) Media handling in a conflict.
- ix) UK strategy in the United Nations.
- x) Timing and modalities of withdrawal of British and American Embassies.

xi) Burden-sharing.

X xii) Strategic deception.

This is a formidable agenda, and it raises some questions:

NO

- do you want all these subjects dealt with in papers which will inevitably involve quite a number of officials, and a wider circle of Ministers? This applies particularly to (ii), (iii) and (xii). They could be omitted for the time being, and handled on a more restrictive basis. (iv) might be handled by MoD alone. *should be kept to very few people.*

- Some of the subjects are short-term and operational. We do not need elaborate papers. They can come up to OD(G) on the basis of notes by the Ministers responsible, in the ordinary way. This would apply to (viii), (ix), (x) and (xi).

- Some are wider-ranging, longer-term issues which are good subjects for deeper study, with papers to come to OD(G) or even OD in due course, but not necessarily in the next few weeks. That applies to (vi) and (vii).

You have a private meeting with the Foreign and Defence Secretaries early next week to talk through some of the most sensitive matters. I suggest you discuss the procedure *and for* handling of such subjects with them. Meanwhile content:

- to allow the attached paper on response to Iraq's use of CW/BW to be circulated to OD(G) for discussion on Thursday?
- for me to minute out on the other issues as proposed above?

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL
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