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PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

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X | activating requests for interviews to Ministers?  
Fine - but are we  
/ S.I.

Iraq/Kuwait: Sustaining National Unity

1. It was agreed at OPD(G) on 5 December that members of OPD(G), the Lord Privy Seal, the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should be briefed on, and take the opportunity to expound, the Government's policy on the Gulf crisis. I enclose a set of briefing notes on the crisis, which have been deliberately kept concise, covering the main aspects of Government policy.

2. If any recipient would like more detailed briefing, we have a great deal of further information we can supply. I shall arrange for up-dated briefing to be circulated if and when major developments occur.

3. I very much hope that those concerned will be able to use these notes in broadcasts and speeches.

4. I am copying this minute to members of OPD(G), the Lord Privy Seal, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Sir Robin Butler.

D.H.

(DOUGLAS HURD)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
18 December 1990

## THE GULF CRISIS : BRIEFING NOTES

### 1. KEY POINTS

- Iraq's illegal occupation of Kuwait has been the subject of 11 mandatory UN Security Council Resolutions, which have set out the conditions for a settlement of the crisis. The main conditions are:
  - Full and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait
  - The Restoration of the legitimate Kuwaiti Government
  - The release of all hostages.
- The last of these conditions now fulfilled, but the other two remain. These are not British or US requirements, but those of the international community, as embodied in Security Council Resolutions.
- SCR 678 authorises the use of "all necessary means" if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January. This deadline is not a trigger for military action. Conflict is not automatic from that date. Rather, there is a period of goodwill during which Iraq can safely withdraw from Kuwait. If Iraq complies fully with the Resolutions by 15 January, it need have no fear of attack.
- We still want a peaceful solution. But that lies in Saddam Hussain's hands. He can choose peace today. There can be no compromise which falls short of the requirements of the United Nations.
- We welcome the US initiative for talks with Iraq. This is an opportunity to ensure that Saddam Hussain understands what is required of him, viz full compliance with Security Council Resolutions. EC Presidency will reinforce this message. This is not negotiation, but a restatement of the international commitment to the Security Council Resolutions. Iraqi rejection of US-proposed dates for meetings casts doubt on Iraqi seriousness.

- We welcome the release of all hostages. But they should never have been held against their will.

## 2. FURTHER BACKGROUND POINTS

- Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was in flagrant breach of its international obligations under the UN Charter and the Arab League Charter, both of which it has signed. The cause of the crisis is Iraq's naked and unprovoked aggression.
- By its actions Iraq has been isolated internationally. The United Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League and the Islamic Conference Organisation have all condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and called for Iraqi withdrawal.
- The multinational forces in the Gulf are there at the express request of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states in pursuance of the aims of the international community as expressed in the Security Council Resolutions. There is no wish to keep the international forces there longer than is necessary to do the job for which they have been deployed. Over 25 nations have sent contingents.
- Following the implementation of the Security Council Resolutions on Kuwait there will have to be consideration of a security structure to guarantee the long term stability of the region. The nature of such a system must be primarily for the countries of the region to agree, but the wider international community, including Britain, stand prepared to play its part.
- In the long term, it will be necessary to resolve the other problems of the region. We have long supported the idea of an international conference on the Arab/Israel problem. The invasion of Kuwait set back the search for peace and a settlement between the Arabs and Israel. But once the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait has been reversed we can and shall again focus our efforts in the search for a peaceful solution to this dispute.

### 3. SOME FURTHER QUESTIONS

#### **Q: Why not wait longer?**

- Waiting is a not a cost-free solution. The real cost is to the lives of people in Kuwait under Iraqi occupation and to the fabric of their society, which is being systematically and continually destroyed. The methods of the Iraqi forces are ruthless and brutal.
- The decision to release hostages does not reflect a change of heart but was a calculation that it was no longer in Iraq's interests to hold them because this reinforced the determination of the international community to oppose Iraq. But he still holds tens of thousands of hostages - every Kuwaiti man, woman and child. The Kuwaiti people cannot afford to wait.

#### **Q: But what about sanctions?**

- Many countries have united in a sincere effort to make sanctions have an effect on Iraq. Iraq has been unable to sell its oil, earn foreign exchange or import vital industrial goods. But, after over four months, Saddam Hussain still holds out. The test of the effectiveness of sanctions is if they persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. The evidence is that sanctions alone will not be enough.
- The existence of the military option is an essential component of the peaceful pressures on Iraq. To remove that pressure is not to go the extra mile for peace, but to abdicate responsibility in a way which would mean that no small state could feel safe.