

~~99A-16(A-B)~~
c/c



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PM/91/002
PRIME MINISTER

COO
S/i

The Threat to British Civil Aviation in the Event
of a Conflict in the Gulf

1. I have seen Malcolm Rifkind's minute to you of 20 December. I agree with his conclusions.
2. We cannot predict exactly the scale of terrorist activity in the event of hostilities in the Gulf. Nevertheless, it seems likely that we will face a substantially greater threat. Civil aviation is an obvious and vulnerable target. I agree, therefore, that we must take a more active role in civil aviation security overseas, but without disturbing the essential basis of host State responsibility, which is the only feasible system.
3. We are ready to do all we can to urge host States to carry out their responsibilities effectively. We shall also report on security at airports overseas. This, however, can only be a temporary arrangement. Given the Department of Transport's view (which I share) that the terrorist threat may last for some time, I hope that it will soon be possible to recruit a suitable team to take on the inspection of overseas airports in the longer term.

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4. I am sending copies of this minute to colleagues in
OPD(T), the Chief Secretary and to Sir Robin Butler.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D.H.', written in a cursive style.

(DOUGLAS HURD)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
4 January 1991

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MIDDLE EAST: Situation 1938

