



Ref. A091/44.

PRIME MINISTER.

Cabinet, 10 January: Possible Military Action in the Gulf.

(1) You will have discussed the background at OPD(G) before Cabinet. You may wish to invite the Foreign Secretary to set the international political scene for the discussion of the Gulf, in particular the outcome of Mr Baker's meeting with Tariq Aziz, and the efforts made over the past five months to persuade Iraq to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait. He might also summarise the basis for the military option provided in UN Security Council Resolution 678. (2) You might then ask the Defence Secretary to brief colleagues on the (3)

overall military situation and the present position of the British ground, air and naval forces in the Gulf.

4. You may wish to ask for comments from other Ministers. The Energy Secretary could be asked to comment on the implications for energy supplies of a possible conflict. The Attorney General, who has been invited for this item, could reassure colleagues on the legal basis for the military option.

5. The Environment Secretary will almost certainly wish to comment on the environmental aspects of a Gulf conflict. The Chancellor of the Exchequer may wish to flag the public expenditure implications.

6. Depending on discussion at OPD(G), you may wish to inform Cabinet of the Government's plans for a possible debate on the Gulf in the House of Commons on 15 January.



7. You may wish to conclude the discussion by inviting colleagues to give you formal authority, in consultation with the US Government, to commit British troops to enforce implementation of ^{the relevant UN Security Council} UN Resolutions ~~and Government objectives~~ ^{*} at an appropriate moment after 15 January if Saddam Hussain does not comply fully with ^{these} ~~UN Security Council~~ Resolutions.

R.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER.

8 January 1991

* on reflection, I suggest omitting the words "and Government objectives" from the conclusion since it could stimulate questions about what the precise objectives are ^(which we have not circulated to Cabinet) and they are anyway all covered by the UN resolutions.