

Title: LOBBY BRIEFING THURSDAY SEPT 6 11.00 AM

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister will be working at No 10 this morning. At 10.30 am she chaired a meeting of the Cabinet (all present except Peter Brooke who has a long-standing previous engagement in Camberley, Malcolm Rifkind who was undertaking the engagements which the Prime Minister has had to forego in Scotland because of the Emergency Debate and David Waddington who was on official business in Australia).

She will open the Emergency Debate on the Gulf in the House of Commons this afternoon at 2.30 pm.

PRESS NOTICES

None

PUBLICATIONS

No 10 - Prime Minister's reply to Paddy Ashdown on Article 51.

IN THE HOUSE

Statements

None

Answers of Interest

Written Answer pursuant to Question No 34 on the Order Paper of July 2 (answer will say consent and planning permission has been given for the construction of a PWR at Hinckley Point C power station).

Press Notice and publication around 2.30 pm. John Wakeham will do interviews.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS

HMT - Chancellor will have talks and a working lunch with Mr Hashimoto, Japanese Finance Minister (photo-call 12.15 pm outside No 11 Downing Street).

DES - Children's Reading press notice around noon.

HO - 1989 Statistics of Drug Seizures and Drug Offenders. Press notice at 3.30 pm.

DTI - Peter Lilley hosts meeting of Airbus Ministers. Press conference at Lancaster House at 3.00 pm.

### Gulf Crisis

Asked whether we could characterise Douglas Hurd's report to Cabinet this morning, we said we had had no feedback yet but would try and let the Lobby have something after Cabinet. We assumed that Tom King would also be reporting to Cabinet on his recent tour of the Gulf and the Prime Minister would doubtless tell Cabinet what discussions she had been having. We stressed that while a substantial part of Cabinet would clearly be given over to discussing the Gulf crisis, it was an opportunity for developments in other areas to be reported to Ministers, as this was the first meeting since before the Recess. We confirmed that there would be no separate Ministerial meeting today to discuss the Gulf.

We said we were not aware that there had been any discussion between the Prime Minister and Neil Kinnock. Nor had she seen Douglas Hurd since his return yesterday evening. Asked whether his report might not have implications for the Prime Minister's speech, we reminded the Lobby that their offices were of course in constant contact.

In response to a question about whether the Prime Minister would have any announcements to make in her speech this afternoon, we said that there was not likely to be anything very substantial. The speech would last for about half-an-hour. The Prime Minister would review the history of the Gulf area and the events which had taken place. She would speak in familiar resolute terms and during the course of her speech would tackle a number of the issues which had arisen during the crisis. In particular she would deal with the question of use of force and the application of Article 51 of the UN Charter in terms similar to those set out in her reply to Paddy Ashdown. Asked whether the Prime Minister would take account of the strong opposition to the application of Article 51, we retorted that we were not aware there was strong opposition. There had been substantial bipartisan support for the Government's response to the crisis to date although we accepted that in some quarters this was beginning to fray at the edges. We certainly were not going to characterise the Debate in advance of its taking place. We thought there would be a good turn-out on the Government front bench and generally in both Houses.

Pressed as to whether she would have anything new to say on the question of aid to countries suffering deprivation as a result of the imposition of UN Sanctions against Iraq, we confirmed an announcement would be made. We reminded the Lobby that we were already making aid available; directly through bilateral aid to individual countries and multilaterally through our contribution to the EC. We reminded the Lobby that this was one of the

questions which EC Foreign Ministers would be considering at their meeting in Brussels tomorrow which William Waldegrave would be attending. Other issues likely to be discussed were the problems faced by our Embassies in Kuwait, hostages and plight of refugees.

Turning to military issues, we confirmed that an increase in our defence commitment was under consideration by Ministers but we could not go beyond that. We said that in response to queries the previous evening from the Lobby as to whether an aircraft carrier was about to be dispatched to the Gulf, we had checked with the MOD and discovered the rumour was unfounded. Pressed as to whether today's Cabinet would take the decision to enhance our military disposition in the Gulf, we guided the Lobby we thought the decision would be one for the slightly longer term. We could not rule out that ground troops might be sent at some point.

We briefed the Lobby on the latest information available to us. The 306 hostages who had made the journey overland from Kuwait to Baghdad on Tuesday were currently being held in three hotels while Embassy staff attempted to get exit visas for them. We understood that an Iraqi Airways jet had been chartered to fly them to Amman where they could pick up a British Airways service to London. We hoped that arrangements could be made for them to leave soon.

Another convoy of 180 people including, we understood, the 30 detained on Tuesday in Kuwait had made the same journey overnight. A further convoy, including 50 Britons, had been organised in Kuwait and we understood it had left at 6.15 this morning. 28 Britons had arrived in Paris on an Air France flight this morning and were making their way back to Britain.

We said there was to be a NATO Ministerial meeting on Monday to which US Secretary Baker was expected to report on the outcome of President Bush's Summit with President Gorbachev in Helsinki over the weekend. Asked whether we could clarify President Bush's travel plans, we said we had no firm indications at this time. As of now we knew of no plans for him to meet the Prime Minister. We reminded the Lobby that they had last met at the White House in early August when the Prime Minister was returning to London from Aspen but they had talked regularly on the telephone since then. We guided the Lobby that the Prime Minister would be going to New York at the end of September.

#### Michael Forsyth

Asked whether the Prime Minister would be seeing him today, we said we were not aware of any plans for them to meet. There was nothing in the diary nor were we aware of any Ministerial changes coming in the near future. We reminded the Lobby that Michael Forsyth might well be in the House for this afternoon's Debate.