



SECRET AND PERSONAL

②

Ref. A03098

*Prime Minister*

MR. ALEXANDER

*MS*

*Handwritten initials*

While I was in Washington on Thursday, 25th September 1980 for a meeting of Personal Representatives, I called on Dr. Brzezinski at the White House, at his request, at 3.00 pm that day.

2. At that stage the Prime Minister's reply to the message from the President about contingency planning in relation to the situation in the Gulf had not yet been received in the White House. I was able to assure Dr. Brzezinski that the President could expect a prompt and positive answer. I reported separately by telegram what Dr. Brzezinski told me about the French response.

3. We agreed that the conflict was unlikely to be brought to an end until the Iraqis had achieved their objectives, whatever those were. At present they seemed to be limited, and not far short of being realised; but it could well be that the objectives themselves might be extended, if Iraqi operations on the ground continued to be successful. It would not be possible to expect an end to the fighting for at least another few days. Dr. Brzezinski said that the statement which had been made by the President the previous day had been designed primarily to reassure and calm oil markets, with a view to avoiding the development of the sort of scramble and price rise which followed the Iranian revolution and the Shah's departure into exile. Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we should consider making a similar statement. (I was able to mention this to the Secretary of State for Energy in the British Embassy at Washington later that day, and he said that his meeting the following day with the American Secretary for Energy might provide the opportunity for saying something of that kind.)

4. Dr. Brzezinski and I briefly discussed the situation in Afghanistan. We agreed that it appeared that the Russians were not intending significantly to increase their own commitment in the country, but were settling down for a long haul. Dr. Brzezinski said that there were signs that the Russians were seeking to train an Afghan force capable of taking more of the load of "pacification" off the Soviet troops.



SECRET AND PERSONAL

5. On Poland, we agreed that the Polish Government, under pressure from the Soviet Government, would be at pains to try to whittle away concessions that had been won. The danger of Soviet military intervention was not by any means past, though there were no signs of preparation for it at present. Dr. Brzezinski drew a parallel with Czechoslovakia in 1968: he said that, if one set out a schedule of the events of 1968, what had happened so far in Poland appeared to take one about half way through that schedule. The parallels were in many respects disturbingly similar. But he thought that the Soviet Government would be very reluctant to intervene in Poland, partly because of their commitments elsewhere and partly because they could expect more resistance in Poland than they encountered in Czechoslovakia, including resistance by the Polish Army.

6. We very briefly discussed crisis management. I said that it had been a convenient coincidence that at the time of the conflict in the Persian Gulf Foreign Ministers had been assembled in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, and it had been possible to have consultations speedily at a high level. Dr. Brzezinski agreed that that had been convenient, and thought that we should need to provide ourselves with machinery for quadripartite consultation which could if necessary be quickly and discreetly activated. We did not pursue this discussion in detail, though I commended the proposals for consultation in Paris discussed by the four Foreign Ministers in New York.

7. Dr. Brzezinski said that he hoped that after the election we might think in terms of another meeting of the kind which we had had with Monsieur Wahl and Herr von Staden in Venice. Again, and for obvious reasons, we did not pursue this, though we agreed to be in touch after the election.

8. I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Walden.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

30th September, 1980