

27a-b

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING OF MINISTERS: GULF

You have a regular meeting of Ministers tomorrow to consider developments in the Gulf. The main subjects which you will want to cover are:

DIPLOMATIC

Activity at the United Nations

3 weeks

The Resolution dealing with compensation should go through tonight, after the vote was postponed at the Soviet's request. There are no immediate plans for further resolutions, although the Americans are continuing to show interest in returning to the UN for authority to use force.

European Council

The European Council in Rome agreed very satisfactory statements on the Gulf and on hostages. There may be questions in Parliament about whether the latter statement should be seen as a criticism of Mr. Heath.

Soviet activities

We do not yet have an account of Mr. Primakov's meetings in Baghdad, although the impression given to the media is that he did not get anywhere. But following his meeting in Paris with President Mitterrand, President Gorbachev said unhelpfully that a military solution must be avoided and the right way forward was for a conference of Arab countries to discuss the problem. The Russians are clearly still unreliable on this whole subject.

Meeting with Prince Bandar

You might mention your meeting today with Prince Bandar. His main concern was to encourage you to press the Americans not to

delay any longer before deciding on the military option. He mentioned 5-15 December as the period when action ought to be initiated.

Sanctions

There continues to be a steady stream of reports of breaches of sanctions. The Yugoslavs are among the worst offenders. There are also reports of aircraft from a number of countries, notably Sudan and Belgium, who file flight plans for Jordan, then change them to Iraq while in mid-flight.

The Iraqis have cancelled petrol rationing. It is not clear whether this is just a piece of bravado to show that sanctions are not working, or means that they have overcome problems they faced with the supply of additives for the refining process.

Hostages

The French hostages were due to return to France today. The suspicion remains that the French have struck some sort of deal: the aircraft bringing them is returning with medical and other supplies.

The Defence Secretary met the wives of members of the British Liaison Team in Kuwait and did not have a very easy time.

Burden-sharing

Chancellor Kohl told you in Rome that he would be replying positively to your letter about sharing the costs of our military deployment, and that the details should subsequently be discussed between Teltschik and me.

Secretary Baker's visit

Secretary Baker is to visit Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Gulf from 3 November and will then be in Europe from 6 to 8 November. He wants to come here early on 7 November but we are

saying this is impossible and he must make it 8 November (you have the Debate on the Address on 7 November).

President Mitterrand's views

President Mitterrand took a robust line in discussion with you in Rome saying that France was prepared to use military force and that he expected this to be necessary during the autumn/winter.

MILITARY

Military Staff Committee

The Military Staff Committee was due to meet this afternoon in New York. We should have an account by the time of your meeting.

American deployments

*Reports - don't take up further discussion*

General Scowcroft told me at the end of last week that the Americans were thinking of sending two more divisions. The necessary tanks were already on the way. He expected the additional forces to be in place by early December (rather than the late January which CDS had reported at the last meeting).

7 Armoured Brigade

7 Armoured Brigade was due to complete its arrival in Saudi Arabia today and will now need a period of about two weeks to become acclimatised and work up. You will want to satisfy yourself that work is in hand to identify possible replacements if they are needed.

*CDS?*

C. D. POWELL

29 October 1990

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## MR GORBACHEV'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN PARIS: 29 OCTOBER

Mr Gorbachev himself has said that international solidarity is vital and that Iraq should not be given grounds to hope that there will be any weakening of the international community's resolve.

*Further SC  
resolutions  
today*

The international community is clear that the aim must be the full and unconditional implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions. Saddam Hussain must not be allowed to gain from his aggression. This means:-

- Unconditional and complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.
- The restoration of the legitimate government.
- The release of all the hostages.

We hope that the pressure of sanctions will persuade Saddam Hussain to comply, but it would be wrong to rule out other options, including military action.

[If necessary]

Not clear what inter-Arab mechanism Mr Gorbachev was talking about. The Arab League failed in its efforts to find a solution as have several Arab leaders.

Saudi Arabia has been in the vanguard of those opposing the Iraqi invasion. Not clear what initiative Mr Gorbachev hopes they will take. The Saudis have told us that Prince Sultan's remarks last week were not intended to imply that they would accept a partial withdrawal: their position remains firm. GCC has vowed no concessions or solutions outside UN Security Council Resolutions.

Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary saw Mr Primakov last week. No sign then that his talks in Iraq had resulted in any progress. Important that Saddam Hussain should not be given an opportunity to drive wedges within the alliance. We note that President Mitterrand did not endorse Gorbachev's call for an inter-Arab meeting.

*Secret talks?*

CC2AAG *David Keen would be referring to.*

[Unattributable]

It is worth noting that ad hoc consultations of the Military Staff Committee are taking place today in New York at Soviet suggestion.

IRAQ/KUWAIT: POSITIVE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

1. Key objectives this week are:

- to continue to highlight the brutality and illegality of the Iraqi occupation;
- to demonstrate that Saddam Hussein faces a powerful, united and effective military force against which he cannot win;
- to highlight evidence of sanctions beginning to bite;
- to counter views that a compromise solution is attainable or desirable;
- to counter Iraqi attempts to portray the alliance against Iraq as weakening.

2. Briefing Material

In the week beginning 22 October we circulated:

- a) a new edition of the FCO briefing notes (attached);
- b) background notes on (i) atrocities in Kuwait, and (ii) the Security Council Resolutions and Iraq's isolation at the United Nations;
- c) next week we shall issue notes on (i) the international force, and (ii) effectiveness of sanctions and falling morale among Iraqi troops.

3. Written Press

We are considering further interviews by the Foreign Secretary with Arab and Muslim journalists and with CMN. Briefings for Arab and Islamic journalists in London and the supply of material to the press in target countries remain priorities.

4. Television

- a) We distributed a video on 27 October with further evidence of Iraqi brutality and destruction in occupied Kuwait, coupled with coverage of Kuwaiti and British public diplomacy (the Amir of Kuwait's call on the Prime Minister, Mr Waldegrave's photo-call with demonstrators

outside Parliament, statements by the Foreign Secretary and the Kuwait Finance Minister, Kuwaiti evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee on 24 October).

- b) Our earlier video (Atrocities in Kuwait) was shown on a number of Gulf television stations; it has been circulated in cassette form by Middle East posts. It was also used by television stations in Australia, Germany, Japan, Mexico and Spain.

5. Radio

Further COI produced material, has been placed with Radio Monte Carlo and with Gulf Radio stations.

We have established that the Kuwaitis have been given access to both Saudi and Egyptian radio stations. We continue to gather and pass to the Kuwaitis information on mobile medium wave and FM broadcasting stations including sources of supply and delivery times.

The Head of the BBC Arabic Services has visited Saudi Arabia and Egypt. A senior correspondent is visiting Bahrain, UAE and Qatar. We continue regularly to brief the Head of the Arabic Service on HMG's policies.

The two Kuwaiti organisations in London (Association for Free Kuwait and Campaign for Free Kuwait) are improving their public presentation and consulting us closely. But there is still a lack of drive and cohesion in the efforts of the Kuwait Government. We are following up the Foreign Secretary's advice to the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister to take on a public relations company.

Home Office and FCO Officials briefed Muslim community leaders (including the three man group that recently visited Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia) on 25 September prior to a meeting of the community on 28 October to consider the situation in the Gulf. British Muslims remain very susceptible to arguments for a compromise solution; they are concerned that hostilities will divide their loyalties to Britain and the wider Muslim community.

We have arranged to hold talks at official level with State Department and USIA representatives in London on 12 November. The agenda will cover objectives of UK and US overt positive information campaigns in Iraq/Kuwait, themes and means used.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
29 October 1990

CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES

CURRENT ISSUES: BULL POINTS

1. Key points
2. List of points for use with Arabs and other Muslims
3. Effects of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait
4. What happens if sanctions do not work
5. Reference papers

(Revision)

26 October 1990



## THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES

## 1. KEY POINTS

- Iraqi occupation of Kuwait illegal.
- Saddam Hussein must withdraw completely from Kuwait: the legitimate government must be restored. No compromise solution acceptable - there can be no reward for aggression.
- "You don't negotiate with someone who marches into another country, devastates it, killing whoever stands in the way. You get him out, make him pay, and see that he is never in a position to do these things again" (Prime Minister, Bournemouth, 12 October).
- Iraq condemned by international community: some countries originally sympathetic to Iraq now committed to sanctions.
- Iraq flouts international law by not allowing all foreign nationals to leave Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Where hostages have been released, this has clearly been a great relief for their families. But there should be no hostages; and Saddam Hussein is not displaying humanitarian traits by letting some categories leave.
- Armoury of international pressures in place: they are formidable, and will grow to become even more comprehensive.
- If peaceful pressures do not work, the international community will have to take further measures to remove Iraq from Kuwait.
- Western forces in the Gulf at the request of Gulf states as part of international force. They will leave when asked to do so.
- Gallup poll (18 October) in five EC countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK) showed most people supported US stance in Gulf. 85% of Britons supported use of military force to free Kuwait or to free hostages, against average for five countries of 70-75%. The latest Newsweek poll in the US shows 61% approval rate for Administration's handling of situation.
- Shootings in Jerusalem on 8 October refocussed world attention on Arab/Israel. But, contrary to Iraqi claims, no linkage between solutions on Iraq/Kuwait and Arab/Israel.
- International consensus on Iraq/Kuwait unshaken by events in Jerusalem.
- "Our Arab partners feel anxiety, feel anger ... but they are not deflected from the task of reversing the aggression against their Kuwaiti brothers" (Mr Hurd, speaking to the Egyptian Diplomatic Club, Cairo, 14 October).

- PLO's initial support of Iraqi aggression undermined their international standing by putting them at odds with their own resistance to Israeli occupation, acceptance of SCR 242 and principle of non-acquisition of territory by force.
- Iraqi action against Kuwait damaged Palestinian interests by diverting world attention from Arab/Israel.
- Iraqi or other proposals designed to trade withdrawal (or a fortiori a mere commitment to withdraw) for progress on eg Arab/Israel, are unacceptable. Iraq cannot be allowed to claim credit for progress on other issues as result of its aggression.
- British government deeply shocked by violence when 21 Palestinians shot in Jerusalem on 8 October. We and EC partners have strongly deplored use of excessive force by Israelis. Need now for restraint on both sides.
- A solution must be found to Arab/Israel. SCR 672 demonstrates international resolve to tackle Arab/Israel problem; reinforced by SCR 673 (adopted unanimously 24 October).
- "The policy of the British government is clear ... that is, self-determination for the Palestinian people and the right of Israel to live in peace behind secure borders" (Foreign Secretary, speaking in the House of Commons, 24 October).

## THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES

## 2. POINTS FOR USE WITH ARABS AND OTHER MUSLIMS

## ILLEGALITY OF IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT

- Cause of crisis Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.
- Security Council Resolutions (SCRs 660 and 662) condemned Iraqi invasion and state that its annexation of Kuwait is null and void. Arab League and Islamic Conference Organisation have also condemned invasion. 84th Conference of Interparliamentary Union (in Uruguay) endorsed universal condemnation of Iraqi action and supported UNSC Resolutions.
- Ridiculous for Iraq to claim Kuwait always part of Iraq: up to invasion Iraq government dealt with Kuwait as a separate sovereign state
- "I remind the Iraqis once again that at all levels of authority, military or civilian, they are personally responsible under the Geneva Convention for illegal acts committed as occupiers of Kuwait" (Foreign Secretary speaking in House of Commons, 24 October).

## SADDAM HUSSEIN: A LOSER - AND ISOLATED

- Iraq has been at peace in only two of Saddam Hussein's eleven years as President. He has gained nothing and weakened Iraq.
- Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980. A major miscalculation. Eight years of war resulted in the deaths of 100,000 Iraqi and 250,000 Iranian soldiers, and foreign debts for Iraq of \$80,000 mn.
- In August 1990 Saddam Hussein threw away all Iraq's gains from the war with Iran, dropping his claims against Iran and reverting to the 1975 agreement on the Shatt al Arab.
- Saddam Hussein's hostages have not fought against him. He has deliberately exposed them to danger (transport to sites). Shamed into freeing women and children but still deprives sick and elderly of freedom. Denied food to Asian workers in Kuwait.

## IRAQ ISOLATED IN FACE OF INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF SCRs (660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 670)

- Saudi Arabia, the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Bahrain), Egypt, Syria and other members of the Arab League (Morocco, Somalia, Djibouti, Lebanon) have called for Iraqi withdrawal and UN sanctions.
- Only possible solution for Arabs and everyone else is that endorsed by Security Council. Anything short of SCR requirements will reinforce Saddam Hussein's disregard for the sovereignty and independence of his neighbours.

- Many Arab and Muslim countries showing great steadfastness in implementing sanctions. Over 100 members of UN have informed UN they are taking steps to implement sanctions.
- Statement by Heads of State and government of six Asian Muslim States (Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and Pakistan) issued on 16 October in Dhaka, called upon President Saddam Hussein to withdraw Iraqi troops from Kuwait in compliance with relevant SCRs.

#### EFFECT OF SANCTIONS ON IRAQ

- Iraqi economy vulnerable - based almost totally on export of oil. Iraq heavily dependent on imports: Iraq potentially rich in resources but financial reserves badly depleted by war on Iran (in debt by Dollars 80 billion before invasion of Kuwait).
- Sanctions will work if full support of international community is maintained and objectives of SCR resolutions steadfastly held.
- Acceptance of Iraqi offer of oil at \$21 per barrel would infringe SCR 661. World oil markets are finding a level nearer OPEC limit: dropped \$10 in as many days (21 October, \$26.8).

#### FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

- SCR 661 makes an exception to the embargo for "supplies intended strictly for medical purposes and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs". Iraqi statements speak of women and children suffering for want of supplies. But contradicted by
- Reports from Iraq which indicate that while some individual scarcities (eg increased prices for cooking oil, queues at bakeries) Iraq at present has plenty of food in stock. Markets being stocked from pillaged Kuwait.
- Iraqi Government saying priority will go to armed forces and that foreigners may have to find their own food. This falls particularly hard on Arab and Asian workers in Iraq. Many have left, but 5,000 Asian workers have been prevented from leaving Kuwait, so that essential services in the city are maintained in operation.
- Obligations of SCR 664 and international humanitarian law give Iraq full responsibility for welfare and safety of third country nationals in Iraq and Kuwait: Iraq should observe this responsibility.
- Iraq has rejected offers from both the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (neutral independent body in a position to ensure relief supplies go where they are needed) to provide humanitarian assistance in Kuwait and to investigate whether residents in Iraq or Kuwait are suffering from food shortages.

- Claims of being champions of Islam from Iraqi Baathist leadership, notably Saddam Hussein himself, deplored by Kuwaiti Muslims in exile: reports of desecration of Korans by Iraqi soldiers, plucking out of beard of religious leader before his murder.

#### WESTERN FORCES IN THE GULF

- International force in response to request from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States.
- Purpose of deployments assisting Gulf States entirely defensive.
- Only reason force is there is Iraqi aggression against Kuwait.
- SCR 665 enables forces with Security Council authority to use measures "commensurate to specific circumstances to enforce trade embargo."
- Over 25 nations involved including Arab contingents from all GCC states, Egypt, Morocco, Syria. Also Senegal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Argentina, Poland and Czechoslovakia.
- No wish to keep international force in area longer than necessary to do its job of getting Iraq out of Kuwait. Expensive: Western public opinion will want it to return as soon as job done.
- Holy places are Mecca and Medina. International force far from them - over 1,000 kms.

#### PALESTINIAN DIMENSION

- Iraq the main obstacle to progress.
- "I do not think that new initiatives over Palestine can take place until Saddam Hussein has been driven out of Kuwait ... This is unfinished business to which we must return as soon as the aggressor has withdrawn or been expelled. Saddam Hussein has set back by his act the cause of peace between Israelis and Arabs, but we cannot afford to abandon it" (Foreign Secretary to Diplomatic and Commonwealth Writers' Association, London, 4 October).
- British government shocked by violence in Jerusalem on 8 October.
- With EC partners have issued statement deploring "use of excessive force by Israeli occupying forces ...".
- UN SCR 672 demonstrates international condemnation of excessive force by Israeli police, and authorises Secretary General to send mission to Israel to investigate incident and developments in occupied territories.

- Reinforced by SCR 673 (adopted unanimously), deploring Israeli government's decision not to accept the Secretary General's mission and asking them to reconsider. Resolution repeats request for report.
- "I hope the government of Israel may yet agree to accept the UN Secretary General's mission to investigate those killings. To do otherwise will risk diverting the Security Council from its main task - getting Iraq out of Kuwait - and will give Saddam Hussein a cause which he will exploit ruthlessly" (Foreign Secretary's statement in House of Commons, 24 October).
- "There is only one man who, in his warped way, might have taken satisfaction from the events in Jerusalem, and that is President Saddam Hussein ... He sees the plight of the Palestinians as ... a weapon which he can pick up and let fall at whim ... The aggression against Kuwait is now the main obstacle to sensible diplomacy ... over the Arab-Israel dispute" (Mr Hurd to Egyptian Diplomatic Club, Cairo, 14 October).
- Should remember Iraq an unreliable supporter of Arab causes.
- Saddam Hussein has killed his own colleagues in government; he has used guns and gas on the Kurds.
- Iraq has done little since 1948 to help the Palestinians. Iraq has not honoured its obligations to contribute to PLO under Baghdad Arab Summit of November 1978.
- Only after Western criticism of Iraq's development of chemical weapons that Saddam assumed the mantle of defender of the Arab world against the Israelis.
- Loss of Kuwaiti funds following invasion deeply felt in occupied territories.
- Only solution in sight to Palestinian problem remains international based on SCR 242. PLO's acceptance of SCR 242 in 1988 a major step forward.
- For Palestinians to throw in their lot with Saddam Hussein plays into hands of Israeli opponents of withdrawal and international settlement, alienates moderates in Israel with whom Arabs/Palestinians will have to talk.
- Palestinians aspire to an independent state. The whole purpose of international action against Iraq is to assure the independence of small states close to powerful expansionist neighbours. "The PLO cannot possibly be in favour of the usurpation by force of one country by another" (Bassam Abu Sharif of the PLO in Tunis on 19 September)

#### MECCA CONFERENCE ON GULF CRISIS

- The World Islamic Conference on the Gulf crisis organised by the Muslim World League ended in Mecca on 12 September, and

expressed strong condemnation of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and called for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal and restoration of legitimate government. Agreed Saudi Arabia's request for foreign military assistance was justified by necessity, and thus in accordance with Islamic law. Conference called on governments and Islamic organisations to do all they can to prevent the outbreak of war and achieve Islamic unity.

#### THE FUTURE

- "It is impossible to say now how long it will be for but our forces will stay there obviously while the host states want them to stay and while we judge the danger remains" (Foreign Secretary, 14 September).
  
- When Iraq has withdrawn from Kuwait, as it must, and the legitimate government is restored a need for arrangements involving UN to ensure Kuwait's security and that of other countries of the region.
  
- King Fahd of Saudi Arabia on 22 September stressed to a group of French Senators the necessity of immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troop concentrations on the Saudi border, and for guarantees that the Iraqi regime would not repeat its aggression against any Gulf state (Saudi Press Agency).
  
- Kuwaiti National Conference on "Liberation: our slogan, cause and aim" in Jeddah from 13-16 October united Salah family, Ministers, officials, journalists, academics and representatives of opposition groups in a commitment to solidarity in the interest of recovering Kuwait with the prospect of a more representative system of government.
  
- "... There's no question but coming out of this crisis there will have to be some new security arrangements in the Gulf ... anything that is worked out will have to be based upon the wishes and desires of the countries in the area" (Mr James Baker, interview on BBC Radio 4 "Today" programme, 15 October).

**THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES**

## 3. EFFECTS OF IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT

- Kuwait a ghost town under curfew and a regime of terror under Saddam's cousin, Ali Majid. Invasion has resulted in collapse of public order.
- Basic foodstuffs in short supply. Long queues for bread, no eggs, no fresh fruit, very little meat; all at exorbitant prices.
- Amnesty testified to US Congressional Human Rights caucus (10 October). After summarising organisation's concerns about Iraq's human rights record prior to invasion, gave further account of repression in Kuwait. People being tortured by Iraqi military and intelligence personnel said to include Iraqi Shia Muslims with suspected links with opposition group al-Dawa Al Islamiyya (membership of this group is capital offence in Iraq). Many individual cases of torture, abuse, summary execution cited. Victims include boys as young as 13. Reported group executions including shooting at peaceful protest group of about 35 women and young people in early August.
- Testimony by Kuwaiti refugees to House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs (24 October) reinforces this evidence (eg doctors forced to take blood from small children for transfusions for Iraqi soldiers).
- Iraq attempting to wipe the existence of Kuwait from the map. Kuwaiti passports, vehicle licence plates, identity cards and currency invalid from 1 October.
- No work, no schools, restrictions on cash withdrawals by Kuwaitis (of their debased currency), shortage of medicines, make leaving an attractive alternative to difficult survival in Kuwait.
- Iraqis have changed the face of Kuwait, renaming districts and buildings and neglecting maintenance. The city is littered with burnt-out cars and debris from fallen buildings. Rubbish is piled high in the streets but giant portraits of Saddam Hussein erected around the city. Most schools have closed and commercial activity has virtually ceased.
- Iraqis have stripped Kuwait of everything they can remove, including equipment and spare parts for industries hit by sanctions. Medical equipment and supplies (and even street lights and traffic signals) have been removed, and the contents of the Kuwait National Museum, Kuwait University and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research pillaged.
- But Iraqi News Agency reported that Saddam Hussein, on 3 October, walked about in the streets of Kuwait city "familiarising himself with its landmarks which were resplendent, reflecting pride in the city's return to the homeland".



- Kuwaiti Oil Minister has said Iraqis have mined oil installations and refineries.
- All Kuwaitis hiding foreign nationals from the occupying forces or displaying the Kuwaiti flag or a portrait of the Amir incur a death penalty, which can also follow failure to declare possession of a fax or photocopier.
- All Arabs and foreigners in Kuwait who fail to report to the Residence Department by 5 November will be liable to legal proceedings and residence permission will be terminated.
- 15,000 Kuwaitis rounded up by Iraqis and imprisoned in Iraq.
- Kuwaiti banks were early target for invading Iraqi command. (\$1.6 bn in gold and foreign exchange reported plundered from Central Bank.) Iraq has forced through a one-for-one exchange of Iraqi and Kuwaiti dinars, effectively a ten-fold devaluation and ordered that the Kuwaiti dinar is no longer legal tender.
- Saddam Hussein's treatment of foreign workers inhumane and barbarous. He has treated Asian workers without any human dignity, and is now using their circumstances to attempt to blackmail governments into breaching the embargo.
- Iraq has encouraged the emigration of young, elderly and female Kuwaitis. Their homes and positions have reportedly been given to Iraqis and Palestinians. Of 700,000 Kuwaitis in the Emirate at the time of the August invasion, only 300,000 are thought to be left.
- Amir of Kuwait told the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September that Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was unique in post-World War II history. Not only had Iraq overrun a sovereign independent member state of the UN and attempted to annex it by force, it had also tried to erase the name and existence of Kuwait from the world political map and destroy its political, economic and social structures. "Rape, destruction, terror and torture were the Iraqi rule of the day in Kuwait".
- Iraq has rejected offers both by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (neutral independent body in a position to ensure relief supplies go where they are needed), to provide humanitarian assistance both in Kuwait and to investigate whether any residents in Iraq or Kuwait are suffering from food shortages. Private Iraqis, especially Kurds, continue to be helpful.
- Kuwaiti National Conference on "Liberation: our slogan, cause and aim" in Jedda from 13-16 October united the Sabhh family, Ministers, officials, journalists, academics and the opposition in a commitment to solidarity in the interest of recovering Kuwait.

- "We will rebuild Kuwait on the firm foundation of our national unity and the legitimate system of government which we have chosen and are content to be ruled by, strengthening consultation and democracy and popular participation in the light of our 1962 Constitution" (Conference Final Statement).

## THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES

## 4. WHAT HAPPENS IF SANCTIONS DO NOT WORK

- Hope to achieve objective peacefully, but use of force cannot be ruled out. "We are not precluded by reason of the SCR from exercising the inherent right of collective self-defence in accordance with the rules of international law - I am not prepared to limit our legitimate freedom of action" (Prime Minister in Parliament on 6 September).
- Poll shows Britons favour use of force. Latest Gallup poll published on 18 October repeats that public support for UK (and US) policy in the Gulf unwavering after 2½ months. 86% of Britons said they would back force to free Kuwait and liberate the hostages if sanctions failed.
- "We are tightening the screw of peaceful pressures but we cannot shirk our part in the alternative course if that course finally becomes necessary" (Foreign Secretary's statement in House of Commons, 24 October).
- Bush-Gorbachev Helsinki Summit statement "we are determined to see this aggression end, and if the current steps fail to end it, we are prepared to consider additional ones consistent with the UN Charter. We must demonstrate beyond any doubt that aggression cannot and will not pay".
- "In the context of recent events I should remind those who regard aggression as acceptable form of behaviour that the United Nations has the power 'to suppress acts of aggression'. There is already ample evidence that this right can be exercised" (Mr Shevardnadze to the UNGA on 25 September).
- "Can anyone seriously believe that if Iraq wins this contest with the international community, it will be easier to eliminate chemical weapons or biological weapons or nuclear weapons in the region? Of course not" (Mr James Baker to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 17 October).
- "I know we have to be ready for any contingency, and we shall be ... that man must leave Kuwait, the legitimate government must be restored, and he must pay for the damage and harm he has done in Kuwait and elsewhere ... there is no more room for negotiation now" (Mrs Thatcher in New York on 1 October).
- "Saddam Hussein will withdraw from Kuwait. He does not have a choice ... the only choice is whether to leave of his own free will or to leave at the point of a gun" (Mr Hurd to Egypt's Diplomatic Club in Cairo on 14 October).

**THE GULF CRISIS: BRIEFING NOTES**

## 5. REFERENCE PAPERS

Verbatims

- VS 42/90 Prime Minister's speech to House of Commons, 6 September
- VS 43/90 Foreign Secretary's speech to House of Commons, 7 September
- VS 48/90 Passage in Foreign Secretary's speech to UNGA, New York, 26 September
- VS 50/90 "Palestine: the other Middle East problem": speech by Foreign Secretary to Diplomatic and Commonwealth Writers' Association, London, 4 October
- VS 54/90 Statement by Foreign Secretary in House of Commons, 24 October

Guidance

- No 47/90  
50/90  
52/90  
61/90

Retracts

Extensive daily coverage of Ministerial statements, spokesman etc. Following are some recent key pieces:

- Foreign Secretary's various briefings, interviews in New York, 25 September
- "Options available": transcript of Foreign Secretary's discussion with Arab journalists, New York, 27 September
- Statement and press conference by Defence Secretary, 1 October
- Transcript of interviews given by Foreign Secretary in New York to BBC Radio and IRN, 2 October
- Extracts from debate on Middle East in House of Commons, 24 October.

Survey of Current Affairs

August 1990, p.277: Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait

The Gulf Crisis: Briefing Notes

- Saddam Hussein's record
- International reactions to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait
- Kuwait: consequences of the Iraqi invasion
- Iraqi claims to Kuwait
- The Rape of Kuwait

Video Material

- Kuwait refugees
- Inside Kuwait
- Kuwait: the atrocities
- Kuwait: destruction of a society

See also Mr George Walden's article in Daily Telegraph of 24 October, attached. (NOTE: we do not have second rights for this article.)

# Keeping clarity of vision in a war of perceptions

It was to be expected that enthusiasm for war against Saddam would waver, though it is surprising it has happened so soon.  
**GEORGE WALDEN**  
 argues that we must not revise our view of reality

**S**UDDENLY, in the Gulf, everything appears the opposite to what it had seemed. The threat of war has all but evaporated as the air is filled with winning words like "negotiation", "concession", "settlement" and, sweetest of all, "peace". As the ground shifts beneath us, the landscape moves with it; issues that were once starkly clear become troublingly hazy.

The "unconditional" withdrawal of Iraq demanded by the Security Council prevents Saddam Hussein from imposing his own terms for getting out of Kuwait, but does not — it now seems — preclude some of the international community from suggesting them to him. Suddenly, too, Saddam is no longer a taker, but a munificent deliverer of hostages. The problem in the Middle East is presented not as Kuwait, but as Israel. Pictures are available of Israeli repression, but not of the daily rape of Kuwait, which thereby becomes a non-happening. Oil prices, which soared when Saddam made his armed grab for more, subside in relief with the news that he may be allowed to keep some of his liquid booty after all.

What is really surprising is that anyone should be astounded by all this. It was always predicted that American popular enthusiasm for military action would waver; that there would be a proliferation of peace plans from foreseeable sources; that the Iraqis would seek to divert attention to the West Bank; and that Saddam would take every opportunity to play catchy tunes on the fiddle of public opinion. Yet everyone seems thrown into confusion when all these developments actually unfold.

From the start, we knew that the staying power of the Western democracies and of the Arab coalition would come under pressure with time. Perhaps the only remarkable thing is that the timescale in question has proved so short, and that the strains are showing sooner than expected. This is a good moment to go back to essentials.

The objections to any territorial concessions to Iraq are as strong as ever. It is not just a matter of saving Saddam's face by tossing him a couple of islands which no one has heard of before. Bubiyan and Warbah would give the Iraqis a strategic advantage in the Gulf greater than the possession of Shatt al-Arab, which they spent so many years and lives in trying to wrest from the Iranians. Already there are understandable indications from Iran that it, for one, would be strongly opposed to such a deal.

It is being suggested that the ceding to Baghdad of the Rumaila oilfield, which the Iraqis alleged to be one of the origins of the dispute with Kuwait, would be a trifling price for peace. This notion does not stand up to scrutiny. Quite apart from the obvious objections of principle, control of this substantial oilfield would be a significant financial reward for the aggressor, the proceeds of which would no doubt go towards rebuilding and modernising Saddam's army for its next act of aggression.

The Saudi defence minister, Prince Sultan, has hinted at territorial concessions. Little weight should be attached to his remarks. Like their Western counterparts, Arab politicians have personalities, and have been known to say things that do not accord with their governments' policies. Prince Sultan has done this before. There is no reason to suspect that King Fahd is in any way weakening.

None of this is to deny that there is uncertainty about the Americans' readiness to resort to armed action in the Middle East. But, then, we always knew that there would be such uncertainty, which would be enhanced by chance events on the domestic American scene, such as the deadlock over the budget — a rather large happening at an inconvenient moment. Attempts by members of the Washington Administration to reassert American readiness to consider adopting the military option were bound to risk a backfire among Arab opinion.

Thus, when the US Defence Secretary, Mr Cheney, recently said that American forces were ready to stay in Saudi Arabia for years if necessary, what was intended as reassurance caused a bubble of alarm at the prospect of a permanent US military presence on Saudi soil. Equally predictable were the strains of military inaction on the Arab alliance. It was always unrealistic to suppose that the Americans could somehow go in, "take out" the Iraqis, and retire in short order. The issue was never as simple as that, if only because of the time needed for the American military build-up. Yet, after scarcely three months, some people affect surprise that it is all taking so long.

**M**OST predictable of all was that some Arab countries and interests would seek to obscure the vital distinction laid down by Washington and London, between a new look at the Arab-Israeli problem following an Iraqi retreat from Kuwait, and the simultaneous examination of these very distinct issues. As on the possible ceding to Iraq of islands or oil, there are attempts to suggest that these are not matters of substance, but merely timing. Perhaps the only unforeseen element was that the Israelis would play into Saddam's hands quite as spectacularly as they appear to have done, by their handling of Palestinian disorders.

There should be least surprise of all about Moscow's diplomatic excursions. We always knew that Mr Gorbachev's solidarity with the United States in the Security Council would be resented by some of his military men.

One of the penalties of the emergence of some sort of democracy in Moscow is that disagreement about how far to go in backing the West in the Gulf has openly surfaced in the Supreme Soviet. The high-profile travels of Mr Primakov, Mr Gorbachev's adviser, armed with various peace plans, are not so much proof that the Soviet president is preparing to ditch his new American allies, as evidence that, for self-evident domestic reasons, Mr Gorbachev has to be seen to be doing whatever he can to head off armed conflict.

With so many kites swirling around in the sky, it is worth keeping an eye on what is happening on the ground. The Americans and the British are steadily moving towards completion of their build-up. The Syrians continue to reinforce their contingent. Mubarak's Egypt remains firm, despite domestic pressures.

On the United Nations front, economic sanctions are holding far better than anyone expected. Diplomatically, the French are showing more solidarity (or if you like, less cynicism) than some feared. M. Mitterrand once again has firmly declined Saddam's typically subtle offer to exchange French hostages for French neutrality.

All this said, there is no room for complacency about the outcome in the Gulf. The old paradox remains: the aims of the allies will only be achieved peacefully if the threat of force remains real. The trouble today is that the option of armed action is thought in some circles to be slipping from the American Administration's hands. Increasingly, we are engaged in a war of perceptions. Once we all start revising our view of reality with every news bulletin, Saddam has won.