

IRAQ/KUWAIT: POSTIVE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

1. We continue to concentrate on clear exposition of a limited number of themes, in particular focussing attention on events in Kuwait. Key objectives remain:

- 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 emphasise international agreement on Security Council Resolutions;
- to highlight the evidence of sanctions beginning to bite;
- to counter views that a compromise solution is attainable or desirable;
- to counter attempts to portray the alliance against Iraq as weakening.

2. Briefing Material

In the week beginning 29 October we circulated:

- a) a new edition of the FCO briefing notes;
- b) a background note on the international force;

Next week we shall issue a background note on diplomatic activity which has taken place to try to resolve the crisis, designed to show that the international community remains solid.

A note on the western hostages is in preparation to counter Iraqi claims that they are well treated and remind our target audiences that the holding of hostages contravenes international law, the Security Council resolutions and Arab traditions of hospitality.

3. Written Press

Briefings, where possible by Ministers, for Arab and Islamic journalists in London and the supply of material to the press in target countries remain priorities.

4. Television

Television interviews with Ministers, designed to project our main themes to Arab and other Islamic audiences, remain a priority. Feedback has shown that such interviews will be most effective with target Arab and Muslim audiences if they lay stress on atrocities in Kuwait and on the illegality of Iraqi action.

A short film about Free Kuwait Day (organised by the Campaign for Free Kuwait on 2 November) will be included in the November edition of the FCO magazine programme UK Today, which is seen in 90 countries.

5. Radio

Iraqi attempts to jam the BBC Arabic Service and Voice of America ceased at the beginning of October and have not been resumed. The FCO Emergency Unit continues to give briefings to the BBC Arabic Service. We have again emphasised to the BBC the need to reinforce their newsgathering in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy in Riyadh are pressing the Saudi authorities to issue a visa to the BBC Cairo correspondent.

6. Assessment of Usage

Our video material has been shown extensively on television in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar. Items have been shown in Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Uganda, Australia, Germany, Japan, Mexico and Spain. Material has also been distributed through foreign television correspondents in London and international television news agencies such as Visnews. It is impossible to assess precisely how widely this has been shown but interest by television stations suggests that the material has reached many audiences. Media and political contacts in many countries, especially Turkey, India, Pakistan and Egypt, have confirmed that they have found our cassettes a valuable source of information.

7. Radio Qatar and Radio Monte Carlo, both of which broadcast in Arabic to Iraq and Kuwait, have broadcast the radio material we have supplied. We shall now increase the supply of items, particularly translations of Ministers' statements.

8. An article by the Foreign Secretary was widely reproduced in the written press in Arab and other Islamic countries. Other written material has been widely welcomed for background use by media and political contacts in our target countries.

9. We are reminding British correspondents in Iraq of the need regularly to draw attention in their reports to Iraqi reporting restrictions. We are continuing to supply material on conditions in Kuwait to the British media.

10. A meeting at official level with MOD and others on 1 November reviewed information themes and the means of putting them over internationally. The meeting noted that major government statements reached wide overseas audiences. It agreed that pressure must be maintained on the Saudis to give better access to the international media and to step up their positive information to other Islamic countries; and that there is scope for more liaison with the Americans on propaganda themes and objectives; the FCO will report back to the group on a meeting with US officials to be held on 12 November.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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