

## PRIME MINISTER

### SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS

The Sunday Telegraph reveals extremely strong public support for the Government's handling of the Gulf crisis. Gallop shows 88% agree with the Government's handling of it.

There is only confusion however about the political effects of the Gulf crisis. While Harris cuts Labour's lead from 12 to 8%, Mori, for the Sunday Times, doubles Labour's leader from 8 to 15.

There is a feeling of inevitability about eventual war in the Gulf though there is no agreement on when it may occur. Some suggest it could be a month away to allow a full build up of forces. The Sunday Times is quite explicit: Saddam Hussein quite simply has to be removed.

Other points from Gulf coverage are:

- allegations that Gaddafi is sending military equipment, including chemical weapons to Iraq;
- the American strategy for recovering Kuwait, as revealed on the front page of the Sunday Times;
- the emergence of Douglas Hurd as a strong contender eventually to succeed you and, according to the Independent, the abandonment by the Heseltine camp of any challenge to you this autumn.

There is also confusion over the economic consequences of the crisis. With the £ soaring the idea of interest rate cuts is canvassed, though without any great conviction except in the Sunday Times business leader which says they should be cut with an over-valued currency, a huge trade gap and a recession in the making.

There is no agreement either about the impact of the crisis on entry into the ERM. Some are apparently quite prepared to ignore sterling's re-emergence as a petro-currency in their lust to be fully in the EMS.

Other points:

- The press manifest considerable concern about educational standards following Sir Claus Moser's remarks; and the Mail on Sunday has some depressing examples of spelling in successful GCSE papers.
  
- Sir Alan Peacock wants the BBC changed into something like the National Trust relying on subscribers.

Bernard Ingham

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