

PRESS DIGEST

Main News

President Bush's speech -- seen as preparing his country for the sacrifice of war -- leads many of the front pages. Further Iraqi action against foreigners gets widespread coverage, along with suggestions that you are to break your silence on the crisis.

Bush takes the US a step closer to hostilities as he accuses Iraq of hostage-taking. But Douglas Hurd doesn't see conflict as inevitable Times

Be prepared for sacrifices, Bush warns US. He implicitly compares Hussein to Hitler. He lavishes unprecedented praise on you, "someone who stands tall when the going gets tough" Telegraph

Bush spells out in uncompromising terms his willingness to take the US to war in defence of national interest, international stability and the lives of innocent US hostages Independent

President gives most sombre warning yet, telling Americans to be prepared for personal sacrifices. "We are engaged in a cause greater than ourselves" Express

Question of Soviet ground troops being deployed to the Middle East can no longer be ruled out. Baker and Shevardnaze have discussed it, on the basis that Soviet troops would come under general command of the Americans Times

RAF units in Saudi on alert for terrorist attack Times

France accused of trying to negotiate a secret hostage deal with Saddam. Plan would have freed Fench hostages, but left the Westerners trapped in the crisis zone Sun

The tabloids report many threats to hostages.

A ten-year old boy feared among British hostages held as "human shield" by the Butcher of Baghdad Sun

Seventy Britons take refuge in our Baghdad embassy . Saddam's round-up condemned as "Illegal and repulsive " by Douglas Hurd Mail

Iraqi troops turn to Gestapo tactics, storming into a Kuwait hotel at midnight to find Britons' rooms Today

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Star calls for Iraqis in Britain to be rounded up as senior Govt sources admit that Saddam's terror squads could unleash a bombing offensive here.

Iraq threatens to eat any British or American pilot shot down over its territory. Crazy threat to turn to cannibalism comes from a top man in Iraq Ministry of Information Mirror

Kuwait embassy staff will continue to operate as long as they can despite Iraq's demands to leave, says Douglas Hurd FT

Iraqi army exposed to shortage of spares after weapons suppliers France and Soviet Union join embargo FT

Moscow cool to Saddam's envoy as officials stress there will be no softening of Soviet condemnation of the invasion of Kuwait FT

Oil prices rise again as strains show in Opec Guardian

You are expected to break your self-imposed silence on the Gulf Crisis in the next two days Telegraph

You are to break your silence. You have adopted a measured tone up to now in the belief that crisis is unlikely to be resolved swiftly Times

Bush's holiday is turning sour. Advisers wonder how long he can maintain his caring image from afar Times

Britons who fled Kuwait are bitter that the Foreign Office told them to stay put instead of leaving on the first day Independent

UN Security Council seeks form of words to back use of force in embargo Independent

Americans warned to leave Jordan as pressure grows on Amman to fall in with West Guardian

EDITORIALS

Times editorial says that Bush is rightly still determined to act in concert not only with American, Arab and Western allies but with the agreement and even active support of the Soviet Union. But if force has to be used, as is increasingly hard to avoid, diplomacy should be seen not as an alternative but as an adjunct.

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Telegraph says that Bush struck the right balance between firmness and caution. The more the outside world can act in concert against Saddam's piracy, the better. However, it is imperative that the sanctions be made to hurt Iraq as soon as possible. If the required majority cannot be secured in the Security Council, then the American, British and Australian navies should do the job. If an effective blockade fails to persuade Saddam to disgorge Kuwait, military force will have to be used.

Guardian editorial says that those who clamour for immediate war ought honestly to state whether they would be prepared to hazard the lives of thousands of fellow citizens. They ought not to be impatient with those who lose sleep over such a fearsome decision.

Independent editorial says the embargo will have to be backed by force and primarily American force. The UN should have no hesitation in sanctioning such action. If the UN is too slow to comprehend the emerging logic of the situation, he must not be afraid to act as leader. His resolution in this role has so far been faultless. Britain and the rest of the EC should not hesitate to back him.

FT editorial urges use of oil stocks to stabilise the markets. Markets cannot function effectively during a crisis. Anything short of a rapid stabilisation of oil markets would play straight into Saddam Hussein's hands.

Mirror editorial warns that Saddam could now threaten Israel. There is one way President Bush could checkmate that move before it is made - he should declare that an Iraqi incursion into Jordan would be treated in the same way as an attack on Saudi Arabia.

Today editorial says that every effort of diplomacy and every ounce of good sense must be used to prevent Israel lashing out and attacking Saddam.

Express editorial says there are perils in the US opting for the long haul. The longer US troops are left sitting passively in the desert, the greater the danger that the US public will start to doubt the value of their being there. If domestic support for action starts to ebb, the momentum for action against Hussein could be lost, increasing his chances of escape.

Sun editorial says the phrase "Duplicitous Bastards" exactly fits the French for trying to do a deal. Beyond importing their cheese, we would be safer putting our trust in a bad-tempered polecat.

Philip Aylett