

PRESS DIGESTPRIME MINISTERMain News

UN Security Council tightens screw - all bar Cuba vote for air embargo on Iraq and Kuwait.

Saddam Hussein warns America faces another Vietnam if it comes to war.

Shevardnadze says that Iraq invasion is "a major affront to mankind" which could set back our civilisation 50 years unless we find a way to respond.

Guardian interprets this as Moscow backing force.

US says Iraq is building up its forces in Kuwait - up 70,000 on a week ago to 430,000.

2 of our 4 remaining diplomats in Kuwait being withdrawn to eke out supplies.

Texaco adds 7p to gallon of petrol - now £2.41 for 4-star.

EC condemns petrol price surge as speculation at expense of customer.

Sun leads with "The Desert Prats" alleging that British troops will get a £85 a month pay cut in Gulf compared with big rises for US, French, Australian and Belgian forces.

Mirror says Archie Hamilton promised a rethink.

But according to Star MOD rejects allegations that our soldiers will be worse off than in Germany; they will in fact be slightly better off.

Wives of 22 Britons earning £100 a day or refurbishing Hussain's palace left without funds when firm employing them stops husbands' wages. Star attacks firm for ignoring its moral commitment for paying the men.

Foreign

Rumours increase, according to Mail, that Gorbachev is about to be ousted by a military coup.

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Gorbachev wants to replace "Soviet" by word "Sovereign" in USSR title.

Environment

White Paper on environment - 350 ways to a greener Britain - gets a poor reception, though with some media welcome from Today, Express, Mail, Telegraph:

- long on waffle short on policy - Bryan Gould
- a damp squib - Simon Hughes, Liberal
- wishful thinking, unrealistic and lacking specific detail - Green Party
- astonishing there are no new initiatives to clean up industry - TUC

Today, famous for its eccentric leads, deals with White Paper as follows - Noise free zone: millions of families promised a quiet life.

Biggest worry for most youngsters is environment, according to Readers' Digest.

Comment

Mirror - All Chris Patten's ambitions have been thwarted by you, the Treasury and Depts of Transport and Energy. But the real loser is the environment.

Today - A bold and promising start. Encouraging to see good ideas adopted as policy.

Express Just about right. An honest foundation for a vast operation which we shirk at our peril.

Mail says it would have been economically unwise and politically naive not to rein in the price of the programme in a recession. But it is the first comprehensive strategy by a British Govt. An impressive beginning. Chris Patten personifies a high seriousness of purpose.

Telegraph - The lofty minded, ready to dismiss this White Paper as waffle or lacking in vision, should be asked: Can you deliver? Mr Patten has chosen to abide by what is deliverable.

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Guardian - This is not an action programme but a discussion paper. Not even the silky words of Chris Patten could mask the threadbare contents of his glossy documents. Round one is lost, but with concerted effort environmentalists can still ensure that the action starts in round two.

Independent leader headed "Thatcher abandons Patten" says the White Paper is as feeble as it is lengthy. It confirms that during the past year the Prime Minister has lost interest in the subject.

Times says Chris Patten and his colleagues have their hearts in the same place as the environment lobby. But where's the beef? The hidden hand behind this document is not public opinion but industrial and electoral interest. Pressure for further improvement is more likely to come from Brussels than from Whitehall. A sad comment on national sovereignty.

FT - The protest that these are difficult times will do as an explanation for a White Paper whose saving grace is that it is printed on recycled paper and is comprehensive. It is not an excuse for a failure of leadership.

Economy

Institute of Directors calls for end to income tax, state pensions and NHS with VAT only taxation and pensions and health provided for privately.

Nurses call for 13% pay rise.

Barclaycard to cut out 470 jobs at its Northampton HQ over 3 years.

A whole page of economic gloom from the Independent.

Industry

Tories call for Govt to ease increase in business rate.

Govt refuses to duplicate Serious Fraud Office inquiry into Polly Peck as requested by company.

Express attacks Warrington and Telford Councils as shameful for paying redundancy, total cost £7million, to staff who joined privatised services the day after leaving the council's employ and are running them from the same offices as when provided by council.

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Yorkshire miners pass vote of confidence in Scargill.

Politics

MORI poll for Electoral Society shows growing Labour support for proportional representation.

Benn attacks Royal Family in his memoirs - Queen can't say good morning without a script; and Prince of Wales is a "tailor's dummy". He also thinks Royal Family loathes Common Market.

Guardian leader: the Conservatives are boxed in to an extent quite unknown in Mrs Thatcher's experience, but while doubts continue about Labour's direction and expertise, she is certainly not dead yet.

Education

Young admit in survey by Readers' Digest that they should have tried harder at school and regret they didn't.

Mail says basic maths standards in schools have plummeted, according to figures out today.

Independent says universities are to mount a campaign for expansion.

Law & Order

Sir Jack Lyons escapes jail because of illness; fined £3million for his part in Guinness affair - will he lose his Knighthood? Mail describes fine as "The Great Escape".

Saunders not to face a second trial.

Arson costing Britain £1 million every day - Telegraph.

Home Secy wants all inefficient policemen sacked.

Police want cost of policing soccer matches to be paid for by a levy on admissions.

International

de Klerk offers one man one vote in South Africa for first time.