

388a-b (1)

Used by PM to
report to JPD (K)
e Cabinet on
10 January

08.07.01

PRIME MINISTER

OPD(G) AND CABINET: POINTS TO MAKE ON YOUR GULF VISIT

You may want to summarise your conclusions from your gulf visit for your colleagues:

- none of your Arab interlocutors were confident about what Saddam Hussain would do.
- they expected him to try some ploy or other before 15 January, eg partial withdrawal.
- but they will not be surprised if he refuses to withdraw, and acknowledge that a conflict is more likely than not.
- they do not show any inclination to think that our side should compromise.
- they all expect Iraq to lose a war, indeed are generally more optimistic than we and the Americans that a conflict will be over quickly.
- their resolve and solidarity is therefore high. Really without exception they see Saddam Hussain's military defeat as the best outcome.
- their commitment to participate themselves in military operations is mixed. But despite some reports about Egypt's reluctance, President Mubarak seemed quite determined to commit Egyptian troops.
- both King Fahd and President Mubarak seemed firm that Israel's involvement as a result of an Iraqi attack would not affect their view (although that would change dramatically if Israel attacked Iraq).
- most of them - and particularly the Sultan of Oman - are beginning to think about future security arrangements in the

Mubarak (not a real world) Saladin

Too optimistic

Common on broad (1) domestic consumption

Gulf. They accept that the responsibility is primarily an Arab one, but want Western participation in one form or another. *Agreed - correct / see Fulton (p. 10)*

- they very greatly value Britain's role and contribution. Indeed all our meetings were exceptionally warm and friendly. They have a high regard for our military presence and performance.
- the morale and professionalism of our own forces, and their confidence, are all impressive. They believe they can do the task which they have been sent to do. Great stress is placed on the need for the air campaign to succeed if the ground battle is to be joined with confidence, and the right correlation of forces achieved.
- generally they are getting all the material support they need. But there are still a few glitches to be sorted out, eg the supply of ammunition, 'rate-capping' on the total numbers of 1 Armoured division.
- the British civilian community are apprehensive but not showing signs of panic.
- in short, the multinational coalition is holding together well: there is an expectation that there will be a conflict and that Saddam Hussain will lose: Britain's role is greatly appreciated: and our own forces are in remarkable ~~settle~~ *settle* and working well with their American and other allies, while sober about the risks and dangers.
- if we have to go to war, we can do so with considerable confidence.

*As in briefing
very confident*

C.D.P.

C. D. POWELL

9 January 1991

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