

STATEMENT BY HOUSE DELEGATION TO  
THE PERSIAN GULF

(November 25-30, 1990)

The delegation reaches the following six conclusions.

First, the multi-national alliance is stronger than most Americans perceive. American troops are not in the front lines; Arab troops comprise all the front-line forces. American, British and French troops are stationed behind the Arabs. The Arabs <sup>states</sup> are not hiding behind American skirts. We had every indication the Arabs <sup>states</sup> are fully prepared to fight -- in part because it would be humiliating for them not to fight if there should be a war. That said, there are still not enough foreign ground forces there. Even before our second wave of troops arrives, we comprise about 60 percent of the deployed ground troops. Europe must do more. This is not America against Iraq; it is the world against Iraq -- but some parts of the world aren't pulling their share of the weight.

Second, the biggest problem we face is that Saddam Hussein appears not to realize what's arrayed against him. He cannot win. We all know Saddam is homicidal; the open question is whether he is suicidal. He seems oblivious to the fact that the world has changed and he can no longer play one superpower off against another. The challenge for us is to try to avoid the immense bloodshed a war would cause -- including for the huge mass of the Iraqi Army ~~effectively~~ <sup>that would immediately be</sup> trapped in Kuwait -- by making clear to Saddam that the world does not lack the will to enforce the mandate that he vacate Kuwait.

Third, the Saudis are contributing far more to this operation than is generally perceived. An economic analysis available

to the delegation indicated the Saudi government will likely run a deficit of about \$10 billion or 15 percent of the Saudi GNP in 1990 despite the huge jump in oil prices. The Saudis are supplying all the construction, all the fuel and oil we consume, all the water, most of the food apart from the dehydrated military rations, housing for troops in built-up areas, plus hundreds of buses and trucks to move our troops and equipment over thousands of square miles, and innumerable hospital beds.

Fourth, the morale of our troops is outstanding. While it is the constitutional right of every soldier to complain, and while we heard that right exercised vigorously, we found no one unprepared to carry out his or her assigned mission vigorously. *The realistic training received before deployment is a clear contributor to high morale.* Every man and woman would *know their jobs and* much rather be home, especially given the holiday season, but all are ready to do the job. The farther forward we moved to interview troops and the harsher the conditions, the better we found morale. In other words, morale was influenced more by the proximity of the challenge than by the primitiveness of living conditions. The best indicators of morale are probably the very low sickness rate -- with hospitalizations running at 43 percent of anticipated levels -- and disciplinary rates. This is a first-class military -- undoubtedly the most skilled, best trained, healthiest and most disciplined ever fielded.

Fifth, we encountered minor readiness problems but nothing of significance. The volume of readiness problems is high, but that's just a natural result of the size and complexity of this operation. The real news is that the readiness problems are minor and transitory. There are no show-stoppers. For example, we learned that while sand interferes with the operation of the A-10 tank-killer aircraft, moisture is far more damaging. And, since there is less moisture in *Saudi Arabia* ~~Dubai~~ than in

~~by order~~  
~~9/5/87~~

Louisiana, where some of the A-10s were previously based, the squadrons find it easier to operate their A-10s in Saudi Arabia despite the sand.

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As for the oppressive heat, that season is gone. The weather is balmy now with chilly nights arriving soon. Other problems are fixed as they crop up. Women, for example, had ~~no~~ <sup>little</sup> privacy initially. But with time, private latrines, shower stalls and housing have been built. Mail can take from (7) to as much as 30 days to reach the addressees. But that is a direct result of the tremendous outpouring of support from home; 220 tons of mail a day was arriving before the Christmas season with a good 10 percent of that mail addressed "To any serviceman." Forty-five trailer trucks are already assigned to nothing but mail duty with the Christmas season expected to double the load. There still aren't enough newspapers and the military is beginning to strain the ability of the Saudis to keep them supplied with bottled water. But there are now four radio and four television stations broadcasting and seven large recreational areas have already been set up, less than four months after Desert Shield was launched.

Sixth, the delegation agrees that Saddam Hussein must leave Kuwait.

~~What we do not agree on is the timing and means to bring this to the Congress~~  
Where we lack complete agreement is on ~~the~~ the appropriate timing and means to bring this confrontation to closure. How do we give sanctions sufficient time to bite without threatening to give so much time that the alliance may wither? How do we balance the logic that any military action be taken at a time of peak readiness -- which may come early next year -- against the desire for a deployment of sufficient length to test the effectiveness of the sanctions? These are the questions with which the delegation grappled every evening and with which the Congress must grapple in the

coming weeks. We could not reach unanimity on the answers to those questions. But Saddam Hussein should take no comfort from this; the fact remains that the delgation is unanimous that he has violated every norm of civilized behavior and ~~will~~<sup>will</sup> not be permitted to profit from his crimes.

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Another equipment issued <sup>g</sup> the delegation pursued was the readiness of the AH-64 Apache helicopter. ~~the~~ the crews ~~found~~<sup>reported</sup> the Apaches in Saudi Arabia <sup>were</sup> performing at higher mission capable rates than any other helicopter in the theater and above the Army's peacetime standard for the Apache.