

## ANNUAL REVIEWS

SUBJECT: KUWAIT: ANNUAL REVIEW

### SUMMARY

1. Governing Kuwait, a small rich country with powerful neighbours remained in 2001 a balancing act. Kuwait depended on American and British protection but had to avoid isolation in the Arab world. The ruling Al Sabah could ignore neither public opinion sympathetic to the Palestinians and bin Laden, nor a vocal press and Parliament with real power. Kuwait's deeds were helpful and bilateral ties strengthened.

### A PROMISING START

2. The year began with a high oil price, a healthy investment income and a growing flow of Iraqi compensation payments. The balance of payments was strong, the Stock Exchange perked up, new construction planned, some major civil and military projects long on the drawing board looked as if they might at last happen.

3. The new ministerial team looked more serious about at last tackling dependence on oil (over 90% of Government revenues).

4. We are beginning to win the argument with this low cost, high reserves producer that OPEC cannot buck the market. The Finance Minister agrees that a drop in the oil price is the only way of bringing home to the National Assembly that Kuwait has urgently to cut government spending, privatise, diversify the economy and train its young people for real jobs.

5. Reviewing the Assembly's progress with me before the summer break the Speaker was able to point to a couple of worthy measures to encourage investment and to serious discussion in Committee of more sweeping economic reform including measures to bring international oil company investment into the fields on the Iraqi border and offshore. The Speaker looked forward to a productive Autumn.

6. But it was not to be. The events of 11 September have since disrupted political life and have hit oil and investment income. On 18 September the Amir suffered a brain haemorrhage and was to London. The management of Government has fallen to Shaikh Sabah.

7. [redacted]

### TERRORISM

8. The Al Sabah leadership, the merchant families and the liberal elite were horrified by 11 September and have since stood behind the coalition: America led Kuwait's rescue in 1991 from Iraq, Kuwait should now stand with America. They succeeded on 23 October in getting half the National Assembly to sign up to a declaration against US action in Afghanistan. To the acute embarrassment of the senior Al Sabah and the liberals, CBS's "Sixty Minutes"

captured all this and broadcast it to a television audience of 60m in the United States; how could Kuwait be so ungrateful to America?

9. Shaikh Sabah, worked from the outset against the Islamist groundswell to clamp down on Islamic charities and to tighten banking controls. The Ministry of Interior were effective in tracking down terrorists. Kuwait has nonetheless been able to make a creditable return to the Security Council CTC and, on completion of new money laundering legislation, will do so to the FATF.

#### MEPP

10. Memories remain bitter of Arafat's support for Saddam in 1990. But the intifada and Israel's reaction caught popular imagination. Hamas has as much, if not more popular support here than the PA. No-one in Government or Parliament can ignore Palestine.

#### IRAQ

11. Paradoxically the Iraqi regime's threats and US/UK patrols over the southern No Fly Zone (SNFZ) give Kuwait unprecedented support against Iraq's unrequited claims to Kuwait's northern islands and oil fields.

12. [redacted]

#### BILATERAL

13. Britain's track record of reliable commitment over the past hundred years makes us to many Kuwaitis still the ultimate guarantor of their security. The RAF detachment has become a symbol of that constancy; ordinary Kuwaitis know that the RAF risks lives in the SNFZ on their behalf.

14. But we still have to work hard to secure a return. Our visible exports lag behind those of Japan, the US and Germany; Kuwait invests in and through London on the basis of shrewd calculation.

#### OUTLOOK

15. [redacted]

16. Britain's advice and support will be highly valued; we expect two large Kuwaiti delegations - women and liberals - in London in January alone. I hope that we can continue to give Kuwait sufficient priority. It is worth preserving. Our standing in the region would take a severe knock if Kuwait foundered.

SUBJECT: KEYDOC: KUWAIT ANNUAL REVIEW

## SUMMARY

1. A better year. More structure to domestic governance.

The

broadest of bilateral relationships, with an excellent, constant engagement, 2004 offers the chance to turn this into real gains for UK. A plea for resources.

## DETAIL

2. 2002 wasn't much of a year for Kuwait. 2003 by contrast was.

3. [redacted].

4. But following

elections to the National Assembly the Al Sabah radically changed the hierarchy and formalised Shaikh Sabah in the job of Prime Minister. This has freed him up to get on with governing; and he has done so. Huge projects in the oil sector, the start of economic reform, legislation to make Kuwait more attractive to foreign investors: all these have made progress in the latter half of the year. But the National Assembly may continue to frustrate the government over key issues including economic reform.

5. The dominant cause of this uplift has been the successful prosecution for the campaign to remove Saddam Hussein and neutralise the threat from WMD posed by his regime. For over twenty years, Kuwait had lived under the very real threat of Iraqi military adventure. This has now gone, encouraging both public and private sector to address issues that had lain in abeyance for years.

6. The year divided sharply into two; pre- and post- Saddam. The first four months of the year were exclusively about preparations for military action, consular and contingency planning, and counter-terrorist work. It was partly luck that we had only three serious terrorist incidents in the build-up to military action. Good security cooperation also played its part.

7. The preparations for action were hugely complex, very demanding, and accomplished with a near unbelievable precision. That chapter is now closed.

8. The latter part of the year saw Kuwait breathe a huge sigh of relief; and then emerge with an awakening optimism. This showed most clearly in the commercial sector. They had retrieved the market of southern Iraq, denied to them for over a decade. As a result of that, and a more buoyant Kuwaiti economy, trade flourished.

9. Economically the strong oil price has meant that they have had

no difficulty in covering their budgeting commitments for the year. They need to put some flesh on the bones of economic reform, if they are going to maintain current market optimism.

#### REGIONAL

10. Iraq still demands most attention. Kuwaitis no longer feel militarily threatened. But they view the security situation with concern (although they are greatly relieved that the south of Iraq has so far proved more tractable than the centre). They have considerable sympathy with our difficulties there and have helped in the way they do best, through the provision of fuel, water, generators, water filtration plants and other kit.

11. Kuwait also worries about Iran.

12. [redacted]

13. [redacted]

#### BILATERAL

14. This year confirmed the strength for the relationship.

Visits by the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary, Lord Mayor, and (most recently) the Duke of York helped it along.

## WHY DO WE NEED KUWAIT?

15. We need them:-

- as the point through which our huge flow of personnel and equipment enters Iraq. The Embassy has struggled to cope;
  
- as a partner in our efforts to combat terrorism.
  
- as a market. We have finally seen an increase in visible trade
- up 30% year-on-year. Kuwaiti companies are now clamouring for more British engagement. British companies, after years of disappointment in Kuwait, need convincing (even with the lure of Iraq);
  
- as an excellent partner for our educational and tourist services. Numbers have been well up. This of course impacts on our visa service provision;

## WHAT NEXT?

16. Did we achieve our goals? Yes. Did Kuwait? Rather more than we expected.

17. What shall we aim to do next year?

- continue the vital work of rear echelon support for our work in

Iraq;

- boost visible trade still more;
- maintain visa service provision at its present level of excellence;
- using GOF and of other mechanisms to continue our engagement on promoting women's interest in the workplace and in politics;
- plug away on our key public diplomacy messages, defined by the new FCO strategy;
- sustain the increase in Kuwaitis studying in the UK

18. Can we do it? Maybe. The one area where extra resources are needed is in our provision of support to Iraq. The UK has committed huge resources to Iraq. Our people there should not additionally have to worry about the mechanics of moving in and out. We'll do the worrying; please resource it.

WILTON

SUBJECT: KEYDOC: KUWAIT: ANNUAL REVIEW 2004

## SUMMARY

1. A reasonable year for UK/Kuwait relations. Externally, Kuwait showed a new regional and international confidence. Internally, government still marred by squabbling and stasis.

## DETAIL

### Bilateral

2. How did we do on our objectives? Probably somewhere in the region of a B+. We scored well in terms of persuading the Kuwaitis to lighten up on their visa requirements; engaging them on a re-energised commercial sector; continuing their constructive approach to Iraq, both within the GCC and bilaterally; enthusing at least some of them through our training programmes to empower Kuwaiti women

3. We also did well in engaging Kuwait on broader international issues. As long as narrower GCC interests do not conflict with what we ask of them, they tend to go along with us. This played particularly well in terms of their support for our position within the regular meetings of Iraq's neighbours, when the Kuwaitis successfully took on a difficult Syria



4. We did less well in other aspects of the bilateral relationship.

5. [redacted]

6. It may also be that the Kuwaitis feel we are paying them less attention. It is a truism that Arabs respond best to fairly regular meetings, even when there may be comparatively little to discuss. 2003 was a year in which we paid them so much attention that we almost overwhelmed them. 2004 saw a very sharp reduction in the number of senior visitors. We need to ensure our attention doesn't slip too much, particularly if we conclude that the defence relationship should remain substantial.

Internal

7. Kuwait in 2004 did not differ significantly from Kuwait in the latter part of 2003. The commercial boom continued, as Kuwaitis relaxed more without the shade of Saddam over them. But it was a commercial renaissance born more out of domestic confidence than opportunities in Iraq. Property, real estate and the stock market here were the main drivers of economic growth, and they have shown little sign of slowing.

8. Progress also continued on some of the multi-billion dollar infrastructural projects in which British companies will hope to play a part. In general, Kuwait ends the year with a buoyant economy and commercial sector, and prospects of more of the same.

9. [redacted]

10. [redacted]

11. The ruling family's well-known internal divisions received a public outing during the autumn, when one senior sheikh called for a family conclave to resolve differences. Kuwait buzzed with speculation about a new Crown Prince;. In the end, they agreed that one more senior family member was entitled to be addressed as "your highness", bringing the number to four. This is probably as dramatic as family politics are likely to get.

External

12. Externally, Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia attracted most attention. The Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah, caused a stir in early autumn when he visited China and the Far East at the head of a large government and private sector delegation. For weeks the papers were full of analysis of this new direction for Kuwait foreign policy: turning from its traditional Western allies to the new frontiers in the East. There are those who say this is yet another initiative that will lead nowhere. I'm not so sure. Kuwait shows a new zest in external affairs, backed by its considerable economic strength. It will be worth watching as the world's fourth largest oil reserve courts the world's largest potential market.

Where next?

13. It will not surprise you that I think we will see more of the same in 2005. Developments in Kuwait are progressive rather than radical. International companies need to take a long view (perhaps at times too long) if they wish to do business with government. With the private sector, things move more quickly and more efficiently.

14. It follows that we should be looking at where best to use our resources and efforts to best effect. we should be ready to sit it out with them, and devote a bit more effort to the booming private sector business. Planned visits by the Lord Mayor of London and the Duke of York over the next few weeks should usefully set the ball rolling.

15. We should also ensure, whatever our reprioritisation of resources, that we continue to pay Kuwait sufficient attention, not least because of Iraq and our continued engagement there, and the ever-present issue of extremism and terrorism. Baroness Symons' visit in a month's time will be a very useful element in our engagement with Kuwait on these and other issues. We need to sustain that momentum throughout throughout the rest of the year.

WILTON

## **DEFENCE ATTACHE REPORTS**

7 January 2002

Captain Chris Peach RN

### **DA'S ANNUAL REPORT**

1. I enclose Col Campbell's valedictory annual report after three years as Defence Attache in Kuwait.
2. This is a small but strategically vital country. HMG rightly remains committed to its defence. Col Campbell shows that we have made significant progress in getting them to do more to defend themselves and to support and protect the UK forces we still have to deploy here. For Kuwait the Southern No Fly Zone and the eight Tornados remain a vital part of their protection against a still threatening Iraq. That and the other elements of our military presence here, including the BMM, play a major part in sustaining Kuwait's confidence in Britain as a key regional player and influencer of US policy.
3. I should like to record my thanks to him and his team for handling this with determination, unfailing good humour and diplomacy. Col Campbell's successor has just arrived; Col Thomas can look forward to just as active a three year tour.

**R J S Muir**  
**HM Ambassador**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07 BY DEFENCE ATTACHÉ KUWAIT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Kuwait matters to the UK. The accumulated profits from Kuwait's oil and overseas investments of the last 50 years have brought curses as well as material wealth. For the one million Kuwaiti citizens, living conditions could hardly be easier. But it is because of this ease that, unsurprisingly, Jordanian and Yemeni visitors to Kuwait are often quick to voice their own assessment of the Kuwaitis.

2. [redacted]

### **THE UK'S DEFENCE & SECURITY OBJECTIVES FOR KUWAIT**

3. In the realm of defence and security, the pursuit of the UK's interests have been formulated by the MoD<sup>1</sup> into five country objectives for Kuwait:

- a. Maintain access to basing and host nation support (HNS) through broad political and military engagement.
- b. Develop defence capability appropriate to meet threats within a coalition context.
- c. Support the MOI and Kuwait National Guard in developing CT capability and border and coastal security.
- d. Deliver high quality staff training, based on UK doctrine and principles.
- e. Support UK defence exports.

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<sup>1</sup> In the MoD's Regional Strategy for Defence Relations in the Middle & Near East, 4<sup>th</sup> Edn, dated 23 March 2006.

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07**

4. In this report the UK's defence relationship with Kuwait is assessed against these five country objectives.

### **ACCESS TO BASING AND HOST NATION SUPPORT (HNS)**

5. The UK continues to enjoy excellent host nation support and operational access to Kuwaiti bases, air and sea ports, and the main border crossing into Iraq. The bulk of the food, water and ammunition required for Op TELIC passes through Kuwait. But if we take Kuwait for granted we could lose what we have.

6. The significance of high-level visits in oiling the strategic wheels of our relationship is difficult to over-estimate. The visit of the Amir to London when he called on HM the Queen and our Prime Minister in February 2007, and then the return visits by HRHs The Prince of Wales and Duke of York to Kuwait in February and March all contributed directly to securing operational access and support for the UK's armed forces. The strategic-level capstone has been shored-up and held firmly in place by these visits makes an important difference.

7. Every day RN, Army and RAF aircraft – including the daily C130 flights to Basra and Baghdad – continue to take off and land at the military side of Kuwait International Airport (the Abdullah Mubarak Base). The Kuwait Navy has continued to make its naval base available free of charge to RN warships operating in the northern Gulf as part of CTF 158. On the border, despite some glitches over vehicles being searched by customs, at the operational level, our Op TELIC convoys have been given free movement into and out of Kuwait.

8. That our Ambassador anticipates few difficulties in securing political approval for the staging 5,200 troops of 1 Mechanised Brigade through Kuwait to complete acclimatization and final in-theatre training in May and June 2007 is further evidence of the privileged access that we still enjoy in Kuwait.

9. Excellent though our access is today, we will need to continue to invest in maintaining the quality of our high-level relationship with Kuwait. Royal, prime ministerial and ministerial engagement with Kuwait's most senior rulers during 2007 and 2008 will remain crucial if we are to continue to enjoy the same level of strategic access that we have today. Kuwait does not want to be taken for granted.

## DEFENCE CAPABILITY

10. On 7 March 2007 Kuwait's armed forces staged their first major military parade in decades. It was an impressive performance: while overhead F18s, Hawk jets and Apache attack helicopters flew past, on the ground dozens of immaculately painted tanks, armoured infantry vehicles, artillery guns and anti-aircraft missiles rolled past the Amir and Crown Prince. The effect was not wasted on the watching TV cameras, ambassadors and defence attachés, including the Iranians: Kuwait has an impressive, modern defence arsenal.

11. [redacted]

12. The Kuwait Army is composed of four armoured or mechanised brigades and a commando brigade. This level of commitment is far beyond the capacity of the small, oil-rich, single city-state that is Kuwait

13. [redacted]

14. Kuwait's Air Force is the most impressive of the three services. The Kuwaitis remain satisfied with the elementary flying training package run for them in UK which all of their trainee pilots undergo.

## CT, BORDER SECURITY AND COAST GUARD CAPABILITY

15. Kuwait's Ministry of the Interior (MOI) has the lead for CT, and border and coastal security and its special forces, coast guard and border forces, well trained and operationally capable. CT training led by JCTTAT<sup>2</sup>, attendance at a border management course in Edinburgh and the continued training of all young coast guard officers at Dartmouth and British universities are greatly valued by the Kuwaitis and provide us with important access to the MOI.

16. Shifting the bulk of the UK's CT training effort to counter serious threats in Pakistan, at the expense of Kuwait and other areas, threatens to undermine what we have achieved here (and elsewhere) with just a few short term training teams.

## STAFF TRAINING

17. The Kuwait Staff College is the most impressive establishment of its kind in the Gulf. It is a regional centre of excellence, attended by international students, including from the US, Russia, China and most Middle Eastern states. It is held together by 18 British officers and warrant officers of the British Military Mission and is run by a British Colonel who is the Director of Studies. Besides the British directing staff, it owes its success to its link with Shrivenham.

18. The Kuwaitis are, rightly, immensely proud of it. The Kuwait Staff College gives the UK long-term influence over tomorrow's leaders in Kuwait's armed forces. It is a continuing success story which we should not walk away from.

19. [redacted]

20. [redacted]

21. [redacted]

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<sup>2</sup> In January and February 2007 JCTTAT ran a search and IED training course for the MOI's bomb disposal experts and a riot control package for their public order battalion. In November 2006 JCTTAT conducted counter-MANPADS (man portable air defence systems) training at Kuwait International Airport.

## **CONCLUSION**

22. Broadly, our efforts in 2006-07 to meet our five defence policy country objectives for Kuwait have met with mixed results.

23. Strategically vital to the UK's current operations in Iraq, and important to the UK's medium (out to five years) and longer-term (beyond 10 years) security interests,

Simon Tustin  
Colonel  
Defence Attaché  
Kuwait

14 March 2007



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2007- 08 BY DEFENCE ATTACHÉ KUWAIT**

1. **Summary.** The year has seen an increasing UK military footprint in Kuwait and growing demand for access to Kuwaiti facilities. The Kuwaiti response has been characteristically generous. Defence relations remain strong shored up by historical ties and an effective BMM.

2. **Access, Basing and HNS.** Kuwait is key to sustaining and supporting Op TELIC. In addition to the routine business of aircraft landing rights, ship visits, visa waivers for military personnel, Kuwait has agreed to the following in the past year alone:

- ❑ Use of Kuwait facilities for Op TELIC force rotations, initially to acclimatise personnel for the summer rotation in Iraq but soon extended to include the winter rotation where conditioning rather than acclimatising became the main driver. This is now regarded by Kuwait as routine business.
- ❑ In autumn 2007 the Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) was established within the US-run Camp Buehring. Despite the relatively small UK population in the KSF, there were political sensitivities to the notion of British troops being based in Kuwait possibly due to the Kuwaiti Prime Minister being poorly briefed by his staff. Sensitivities are diminishing but need to be borne in mind as UK intentions for the KSF develop.
- ❑ Recent weeks have seen a surge in UK requests for facilities at Ali Al-Salem Air Base in support of air operations in Iraq.
- ❑ Other agreements reached in 2007 include:
  - In-extremis access to Kuwait Central Blood Bank and neurosurgical care at the Ibn Sina Hospital.
  - Customs and Immigration procedures for UK military convoys using the civilian border crossing point into Iraq.
  - Temporary loan of 200 Warrior road wheels from the Kuwaitis to cover a period of shortage until UK industry is able to deliver sufficient stocks.

3. **High Level Visits.**

- ❑ This year Kuwait has been well supported by high-level UK ministerial or military visitors reversing a trend which had tended to bypass Kuwait in the past thereby upsetting our hosts. The Embassy has been able to exploit such visits to gain access to senior Kuwaitis and present the UK perspective on matters of mutual interest, clarify UK defence policy and conduct other business in the margins.
- ❑ However, establishment of the KSF is beginning to complicate procedures for visits

4. [redacted]

5. **UK Defence Exports.**

- ❑ Few opportunities exist for major platform sales but there are still many smaller opportunities being exploited by British industry. Significant contracts being discussed with Kuwait include maintenance, overhaul, upgrade and parts for the UK-supplied Hawk & Tucano aircraft. This work combined with maintenance requirements for armoured vehicles, including Desert Warrior and the replacement of the Starburst short-range air defence system cover the bulk of the direct, short term prospects. Training remains important and the UK, through a RN/Flagship partnership, has an opportunity to compete for a significant training contract with the Kuwait Navy.
- ❑ There has, however been better engagement on defence and security equipment with other agencies including the National Guard, MOI and National Security Bureau. This has lead to a significant opportunity with the MOI for the Kuwait Security Surveillance project.

5. **Conclusion.** Defence relations remain strong and are able to withstand the occasional setback without long term consequences. Nonetheless, UK must not become complacent; from a defence and security perspective, Kuwait is vital in the short term to operations in Iraq and, in the longer term, as a dependable ally in a volatile and uncertain region. Kuwait is unstinting in its support but will be motivated less for altruistic reasons and more for national interests. This requires a careful approach which recognises Kuwaiti sensitivities, encourages regular dialogue,

gives timely warning of UK intentions and does not take their sovereignty and generosity for granted.

G M Moynan  
Colonel  
Defence Attaché  
Kuwait

29 April 2008

## VALEDICTORIES

SUBJECT: KUWAIT VALEDICTORY: FAREWELL TO ARABIA

### SUMMARY

1. Kuwait, with one of the most open systems in the Arab world, is not yet ready for full democracy. The immediate priority is reform of the economy. That will require tough decisions.

2. The British and wider Western interest remains in Kuwait's stability, most immediately as a platform for military action against Iraq. We should take the Al Sabah into our confidence, continue to stand by them.

### DETAIL

3. I leave the Service having known the Gulf on and off over 35 years. Oil driven physical change has been stupendous. Socially and politically the Gulf has moved far more slowly: Islam, tribes, extended families and deference to age still dominate society.

An untenable status quo ...

4. But traditional structures are breaking down. The wandering bedu are just a memory; much of the younger generation (55% of Kuwaitis are under 19) form a deracinated urban youth. Drugs and crime are on the rise. Even in Kuwait, which the recent UNDP report on human development in the Arab World ranks highest and only just behind Canada, the status quo is untenable for much longer. There is an intense debate, more visible and accessible here than in most parts of the Arab world about how to move forward.

But which way forward?

5. Kuwait's western oriented liberals argue vigorously in the newspapers they control, in Parliament and in 'diwaniyya' discussion groups for political parties, an elected Prime Minister and executive, full participation of women and economic reform. But they have yet to make much headway beyond the urban elite. They know that they will not begin to do so until they are better organised and more of the western educated young can be persuaded to join their ranks.

6. By contrast the Islamist coalition have an impressive grass roots organisation financed through charities and cooperatives. they have strong appeal to youth and a firm grip on the students' and teachers' unions. The Muslim Brotherhood leadership includes technocrats and some of Kuwait's most able politicians; they claim plausibly to command the majority of votes cast and that they will do still better when women get the vote. September 11 was an embarrassment on which their opponents failed to capitalise but not a serious setback. Their objective remains a Shari'a based Islamic republic.

7. most family members agree with the Shaikhs who run the Interior Ministry and internal security that it is time to get a grip, to stop Islamist inroads into their

traditional tribal constituency (still more than half the electorate), to manage parliament more firmly and to rule more like Sultan Qaboos of Oman - who is widely admired here. The dozen or so big merchant families go along with much of this; they are after leadership that will reopen the country to the big capital projects and the import/export businesses on which they built their fortunes. They want the Al Sabah to sort out the succession and start catching up on Dubai.

8. [redacted]

Where Britain comes in

9. Kuwait's independence and stability within secure borders has been a British interest since the days of Curzon, at first as a strategic point on the flank of imperial India, later for oil and finance and throughout as a vital buffer between the regional giants: Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. We have always turned up when needed and are perceived as the only country capable of putting Kuwait's cause to the Americans as we famously did in 1990. Most of my 27 predecessors as Political Agents and Ambassadors are remembered with respect for their regional knowledge and objective advice, and some with affection. What British ministers say and do is taken seriously, the more so where there is a personal rapport.

Work with the Al Sabah

10. One of our main objectives is to get to know the Al Sabah successor generation who are now growing into Government posts. The Al Sabah will make their own decisions about who takes over and when, but whoever it is should be well known to us. The more we can see and talk to them, both here and in Britain, the better.

But beware the Islamists

11. We should of course continue and deepen our dialogue with the liberals. We should stay in touch with Islamist groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood and the Saudi linked Salaf, as long as they play by the constitutional rules. But we should recognise that we are not going to change the Islamists' basically undemocratic agenda, nor stop their indulgence of fundamentalists.

Our influence requires rebalancing

12. The military to military relationship is in excellent shape. The British Mission have 50 British officers here. We have deepened our contacts and training for the internal security forces. Yet on the civilian side, where reform and development have even greater implications for Kuwait's long term stability, we have struggled. The British Council have just one UK based person here. The Government want our advice and help on education at all levels, on vocational training, privatisation and economic reform.

13. There seems to be a systemic British failing here. Countries poor enough to qualify for DFID's involvement get extensive help in political and economic reform. Third world countries with first world incomes need our know how just as much but get very

little help in accessing it. The new Global Opportunities Fund holds out some hope that this gap has been recognised. If Britain does not take up this challenge others will and reap the commercial and political benefits.

But First Iraq

14. Kuwaitis remain united in their hatred of Saddam and desire to get rid of him. The public line is still against military action. Yet Kuwaitis see that it has a growing inevitability; I am now being asked 'when' not 'if' we will start operations and whether we, like the Americans are already building up men and material.

15. The Interior Minister worries about SCUD attacks and an influx of refugees. There will be a return for the UK; the Kuwaitis know Iraq and their GCC neighbours better than we do and they have sound advice on public diplomacy; we shall need their practical assistance for our military in a way that the Americans already well dug in here will not.

AND FINALLY ...

16. I am proud to have served in the FCO. I see no place in a valedictory for gripes about the Administration; there has been plenty of opportunity to voice them over the years. There is still a lot to put right but we do a better job of administering ourselves and accommodating to whatever is the current management vogue than almost any other institution I have come across. My thanks to colleagues for their help and friendship over the years and to my wife for all that she has put into each of our postings.

MUIR