

DowningStreetGate

The Dodgiest Dossier



IRAQ – The Reckoning

'the fatuous irony of millions of liberal-minded people taking to the streets, effectively to defend the most illiberal regime on earth'
Blair to Bush, 26 March 2003

The voluminous and long-overdue report of the Iraq Inquiry, prepared by Sir John Chilcot, was finally published in July 2016. Pressure from families of service personnel killed in Iraq eventually hastened the protracted process, which commenced in 2009, six years after the invasion of Iraq led by the United States with prominent UK support. The illegal war on Iraq was always about much more than the prime actors, but Tony Blair's impatience to oust Saddam and wilful ignorance about the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq leap from his correspondence with President Bush, compiled from the Chilcot Report and reprinted here.

Charged with 'learning the lessons' of the misadventure in Iraq, the UK has gone to war in Libya and Syria while the report of the Iraq Inquiry was under preparation. Notable and informed critics of the war, such as Dr Brian Jones, formerly of Defence Intelligence Staff, have died before having a chance to see whether all their efforts to expose the fixing of intelligence in the UK proved worth while. Reg Keys, whose son, Tom, age 20 years, was one of six Military Police killed in southern Iraq in June 2003, has consistently campaigned for justice for those who died in this unnecessary war. When the Chilcot Report was finally released, he said:

'Now we have had the endorsement of a thorough, robust inquiry, which has endorsed all our family's fears that these young men and women were deployed on the basis of a falsehood, it has given us a launchpad to go forward and search for yet more answers. We believe there was a massaging of intelligence reports and that those responsible need to be brought to account.'

Mr Keys and others are raising funds to explore whether legal action might be brought against those responsible. In 2005, he stood against Tony Blair in the 2005 General Election, winning more than 4,000 votes in the then Prime Minister's Sedgefield Constituency in County Durham. He has sought an apology from Mr Blair, but never received one.

Mr Blair's notes to US President Bush provide a unique insight into the Prime Minister's thinking, ambition and self-deception. Published for the first time in the Chilcot Report with some redactions, we reprint a selection with some lines emphasised in bold text. They begin in the immediate aftermath of the dreadful attacks on New York and Washington DC on 11 September 2001.

12 September 2001

Note for the President

[From Tony Blair]

There are three goals:

- (1) to bring to justice those responsible;
- (2) to construct an agenda for action against international terrorism;
- (3) to co-opt the world's leading countries in support of action.

(1) *The military response*: Assume Usama Bin Laden (UBL) or associated groups operating out of Afghanistan are responsible. It looks like this will emerge clearly in the next few days.

Assume, as a result of the latest operation, we can pinpoint UBL's whereabouts. We could strike against him. But: (a) pinpointing may, even with the latest operation, be impossible; (b) UBL is a symbol. Taking him out will not end the threat. There are scores of training camps in Afghanistan connected with Islamic extremism. The capability to attack will remain, i.e. we will have taken out the man but not the system. The pressure will be on us, rightly, to take out the system. These camps are all over Afghanistan. The Taliban help, even run them.

[One] possibility would be: to present the evidence of UBL or associated group guilt. State the extent of the camps and thus the problem. Demand the Taliban either yield up UBL, his associates and close the camps verifiably, with proper monitoring; or face guilt by complicity.

Supposing the Taliban don't do what they should or prevaricate; and we strike at them. In this eventuality, we would need:

- (a) to target as carefully as possible Taliban assets, realising they will use women and children without compunction;
- (b) have some method of pursuing UBL within Afghanistan;
- (c) build a strong alliance for such radical action in surrounding states: Pakistan, which needs our help financially; Iran, very difficult for the USA but they are deeply hostile to the Taliban; and Russia;
- (d) possibly give direct backing to the Northern Alliance.

Our task here would be to make action effective whilst not triggering a wave of Islamic support for Afghanistan round the world. But the minimum is to take out UBL and his close associates; the maximum is to charge the Taliban with complicity and target them too.

An alternative to this 'immediate response' would be to take strong diplomatic and political action and deal with this as per (2) below, not a military strike. But the scale of this atrocity makes that hard. Purely a long

game, unless certain to succeed, will be tough to argue for.

(2) *The political agenda against international terrorism*: In any event, we need to construct an agenda that puts onto a new footing action against this new evil. If this is a war – and in practical, if not legal terms, it is – we need war methods. Here are the aspects we need to consider:

- (a) who are these groups? Primarily Islamic terrorists but as with FARC, but not limited to them. There will be borderline cases of terrorists/civil war fighters etc but that should not deter us from trying to establish the scale of this problem; and identify these groups clearly;
- (b) we need to review urgently the laws that in a democratic society they abuse: extradition procedures; how the groups are financed; their money is laundered; their organisations operate; their people move about. This has implications for international agreements and domestic laws. But for years, the West has pussyfooted around with these issues. These groups don't play by liberal rules and we can't either;
- (c) there are states and governments that either harbour or turn a blind eye to these groups. What sanctions and/or action do we take in respect of them?
- (d) After reflection, there will be many who ask: what is the next stage of this evil? What of their capacity to get hold of biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? We know that there are countries and individuals trading in WMD and/or trying to acquire them. We need a range of sanctions and pressures to stop this.

Some of this will require action that some will balk at. But we are better to act *now* and explain and justify our actions than let the day be put off until some further, perhaps even worse catastrophe occurs. And I believe this is a real possibility.

It would also help in the Islamic world if we could find a way to revive the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). One final, off-centre, thought on this issue. It is chilling how widespread is the support within the Islamic world for the theological basis of such terror. Inter-faith dialogue, internationally-led with the full participation of moderate Islam is very important. Suicide killers believe they are doing the will of God. Such beliefs must be countered.

(3) *Co-opting the rest of the world*: The US will do what it must to defend itself. But it is easier with full international support; the knock-on consequences of any action are more manageable with it; and we need the support to achieve some of the objectives.

It is now that the world is in a state of shock; now that it feels maximum

sympathy for the US; now that it can be co-opted most easily. Locking in the international community sooner rather than later is therefore critical.

The NATO statement is excellent. UN Security Council backing would be excellent and allow the US and allies the clear legal base to act.

A G8 meeting in the US may seem unnecessary or even a distraction. But the case for it is this: all G8 leaders would feel obliged to be totally supportive; the Russians and others want it and if their wish is acceded to, will want to prove their support; it allows the agenda in (2) to get off the ground, i.e. it kicks off a process that will lead to action; and it gives some diplomatic and political bustle at a moment when we really need time and space before any military strike. The downside would be any possibility of discord; but that could be sorted and assessed before we go snap on it.

It goes without saying that Russia and China are crucial. We have got to say to the big nations of the world: look we have a common cause in favour of stability and against chaos. Now is the time to put aside other geo-political differences and unite against a common enemy.

My final point. We need the time to get this right. But we also need the heat of the moment to get maximum support for what is done. Point (1) has to be decided on evidential and military grounds and its timing varies accordingly. Points (2) and (3) should be done in any event ASAP.

* * *

11 October 2001

Confidential and Personal for the President

Dear George,

I've just seen the leaders of [REDACTED]. Basically, they all support us and are strongly supportive of your statements and your leadership. All of them were enthusiastic about the way you had kept them on board. But they are under real pressure, more than I thought. Top flashpoints are: extending the war zone; and the Middle East Peace Process. Here are my thoughts.

(1) Military

We are now well placed to move to the next stage of the military operation. We are reaching the limit on air strikes. We may be lucky on an air strike and hit Omar or UBL but we can't bank on it. We need boots on the ground and active, soon. Otherwise, there is a risk that people will ask in the US/EU if we are really succeeding; the Taleban will take heart; the region will worry if it's on the winning side.

It is hard to see how we do this without removing the Taliban; and doing that will take pressure off ‘finding UBL’. If they fall, we can clean him up later. But to take them out, we need Special Forces operations; and the Northern Alliance to make more gains. For this we need firm bases; either in Uzbekistan; and/or in Northern Alliance occupied Afghanistan.

We need visible force coming in, plus something for them to do soon. The Lily Pad is great in the meantime; but it’s still too far away to give us what we need, so I’m told. If the Joint Chiefs can provide us with a clear plan of their ideal Special Forces scenario we can then deliver politically what they want militarily.

(2) *Extending War Aims*

There is a real willingness in the Middle East to get Saddam out but a total opposition to mixing this up with the current operation. [REDACTED] said: we know what you want; you can do it; but not whilst you are bombing Afghanistan. The uncertainty caused by Phase 2 seeming to extend to Iraq, Syria etc is really hurting them because it seems to confirm the UBL propaganda that this is West vs Arab. I have no doubt we need to deal with Saddam. But if we hit Iraq now, we would lose the Arab world, Russia, probably half the EU and my fear is the impact of all that on Pakistan. However, I am sure we can devise a strategy for Saddam deliverable at a later date. My suggestion is, in order to give ourselves space that we say: Phase 1 is the military action focused on Afghanistan because it’s there that the perpetrators of 11 September hide. Phase 2 is the medium and longer term campaign against terrorism in all its forms. Of course we will discuss that and deliberate on it with allies and partners including in the Arab world. This kicks it away for the moment but leaves all options open. We just don’t need it debated too freely in public until we know what exactly we want to do; and how we can do it. Incidentally, the leaders all warned about treating Syria like Iraq.

(3) *Middle East Peace Process*

This is the huge undercurrent in this situation. It is *the* context in the Arab world. The trouble is it’s damn difficult, though your comments on a Palestinian state and [REDACTED]. It will be very tough, but we need a big, new initiative. I wonder if we couldn’t do as follows: pull out every stop to halt terrorist activity on the Palestinian side or at least have Arafat so clearly trying, that it’s obvious to all; then use this break in the weather, to launch a new talks process, effectively accepting at the outset that the outcome will be 2 states living side by side. [REDACTED] involvement

and it's your call, but for what it's worth, I have believed for 2 years now that the US just can't take the strain of this alone; and that contrary to Israeli worries, the [REDACTED] into a reasonable deal. After all, it is the [REDACTED]. If we showed movement here, the Arab moderates would regain the upper hand quickly.

(4) *Propaganda*

The Arab world is just on a different media planet than us. And however controlled their media is viz their own governments, it comes at the Palestinian issue with a completely pre-set anti-Israel agenda; and it buys fairly heavily the West vs Islam story line (Berlusconi still reverberates). We need a dedicated, tightly knit propaganda unit for the war generally and for the Arab and Moslem world in particular: e.g. there is an [REDACTED] – she should be up there saying how Taleban-style regimes in the Arab world would return women to the Middle Ages. There are all sorts of propaganda hits we are taking in the Arab world which we don't need to; and gains we could make, that we're not making.

I hope this is helpful. Let's talk soon. Yours ever,

Tony

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4 December 2001

The war against terrorism: The second phase

(1) *Iraq*

Iraq is a threat because it has WMD capability; is acquiring more; has shown its willingness to use it; and can export that capability. It is in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions. Saddam also supports certain Palestinian terrorist groups, and uses terrorist tactics against Iraqi dissidents. But any link to 11 September and AQ is at best very tenuous; and at present international opinion would be reluctant, outside the US/UK, to support immediate military action though, for sure, people want to be rid of Saddam.

So we need a strategy for regime change that builds over time. I suggest:

Softening up first

- (i) We draw attention to Saddam's breach of UN resolutions; we say regime change is 'desirable' (though not yet setting it as a military objective); we signal willingness to support opposition groups and

build a regional coalition against Saddam; we demand weapons inspectors go back in; and without specifying that we will take military action if the demand is not met, we let it be clearly seen that nothing is ruled out. But our time frame is deliberately vague.

- (i) This is presentationally difficult. We need to be very precise to avoid getting drawn into threats we are not yet ready to implement. But we would be unsettling Saddam; possibly forcing concessions out of him; and giving ourselves room for manoeuvre. Meantime we continue to enforce the No-Fly Zones on a more intensive basis.
- (ii) We apply *real pressure on Syria to stop the flow of Iraqi oil* by closing the oil pipeline. This should be part of our wider Syria strategy. We clamp down hard on Saddam's illegal financial transactions and give Jordan help so that they are not dependent on Saddam for oil and close down his illegal bank accounts. Also the Turks would need to stop illegal oil imports.
- (iii) We need to bring *Russia on board*, by ensuring their financial interests don't suffer adversely; that they will support a new UN resolution; and their withdrawal of support for Saddam will itself impact on him very negatively. (Putin is coming to stay at Chequers on 20 December. I shall raise Iraq but only talk to him about the UN aspect at this stage.)
- (iv) *We support opposition groups*; but this time with far better operational security and with high quality political intelligence. We could set out an agenda for post-Saddam Iraq. This must be seen as anti-Saddam but strongly pro the Iraqi people.
- (v) *We mount covert operations* with people and groups with the ability to topple Saddam.
- (vi) *When the rebellion finally occurs we back it militarily*. We provide air support, as well as support for Kurds in the North and Marsh Arabs in the South if they join the uprising. What everyone in Iraq and around it fears is that we will start this action but not finish it. They need to know, and we need to be clear, that if an uprising occurs we are willing to act militarily in support.

So: my strategy is to build this over time until we get to the point where military action could be taken if necessary; but meanwhile bring people towards us, undermine Saddam, without so alarming people about the immediacy of action that we frighten the horses, lose Russia and/or half the EU and nervous Arab states and find ourselves facing a choice between massive intervention and nothing.

(2) *Philippines*

There is useful work to be done in extending anti-money laundering provisions to counter-terrorism and promoting regional cooperation on terrorism without ASEAN. But the key policy should be to provide equipment, counter terrorism (CT) training and [REDACTED] to improve the capacity of the Philippine armed forces to deal with Islamic extremist groups in the south. We should be ready to join them in hitting terrorist concentrations and terrorist camps in [REDACTED] and air operations.

(3) *Somalia*

A classic failed state. We need a) to interdict UBL fugitives on their way there and prevent supplies from reaching terrorist groups – that will require amongst other things the presence of coalition patrol vessels off the Somali coast b) to identify AQ cells and eliminate them through military strikes and covert operations c) in the longer term, we should look to build up economic and political stability, offering carrots to the Transitional National Government in return for their severing all links with terrorism.

(4) *Yemen*

The approach you took during Saleh's visit to Washington is the right one. We need to set out clear expectations for Yemeni action against terrorism. There may be scope for practical assistance on CT and defence cooperation if we are sure the Yemenis are genuinely committed to this. We should offer to mount [REDACTED] and air operations against terrorists. Our strategy should be to work with the Yemenis if we can, but to leave them in no doubt that if they fail to take the necessary action, they run the risk of others doing it for them.

(5) *Indonesia*

Megawati is exactly the kind of leader who should be confronting Islamic militancy. We should give her lots of political encouragement (I may visit Jakarta early next year). We should help Indonesian efforts to deal with Laskar Jihad through CT assistance and intelligence cooperation. We should also be ready, with Indonesian support/collaboration, to take military action against known terrorist training camps.

(6) *Syria and Iran*

If toppling Saddam is a prime objective, it is far easier to do it with Syria and Iran in favour or acquiescing rather than hitting all three at once. I favour giving these two a chance at a different relationship: help and

support in building a new partnership with the West in return for closing down support for Hizbollah and Hamas and helping us over Iraq. I don't underestimate the problems of this but I think it is possible. We have an outline strategy.

Two final points:

a. *The International Coalition*

I believe international support so far has been strong and also vital. The danger in any action we take is 'unintended consequences'. In Afghanistan, so far, there have been none. But that was in large measure due to Pakistan being with us, Russia on board, Iran passive, the [REDACTED].

How we finish in Afghanistan is of importance to Phase 2. If we leave it a better country, having supplied humanitarian aid and having given new hope to the people, we will not just have won militarily but morally; and the coalition will back us to do more elsewhere. In particular we shall have **given regime change a good name**, which will help us in the argument over Iraq. So in my view the political and diplomatic must always be reinforcing the military.

b. *MEPP and other underlying issues*

Sorry to be a bore on this. The Middle East is set for catastrophe. The issue is not whether Sharon takes tough action. He is bound to and so would any of us in this situation. The issue is whether a process of sorts can be put back on track. If it isn't, this will complicate everything in the Middle East for a wider struggle.

Secondly, we should be working now with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia but also all the other Moslem countries on a strategy for confronting Islamic fundamentalism and extremism.

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Downing Street Memo

During the public sessions of the Iraq Inquiry, Chilcot and his team seemed reluctant to discuss what had become known, particularly in the US, as the 'Downing Street Memo'. This was leaked to the Sunday Times during the General Election campaign of 2005. It contained the memorable sentence, attributed to Richard Dearlove, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service and styled 'C', that in Washington, where military action was seen as inevitable, 'the intelligence and facts were being fixed round the policy'. Something similar seems to have then taken place in London.

SECRET AND STRICTLY PERSONAL – UK EYES ONLY

DAVID MANNING

From: Matthew Rycroft

Date: 23 July 2002

S 195 /02

cc: Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Attorney-General, Sir Richard Wilson, John Scarlett, Francis Richards, CDS, C, Jonathan Powell, Sally Morgan, Alastair Campbell

Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting, 23 July

Copy addressees and you met the Prime Minister on 23 July to discuss Iraq.

This record is extremely sensitive. No further copies should be made. It should be shown only to those with a genuine need to know its contents.

John Scarlett summarised the intelligence and latest Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) assessment. Saddam's regime was tough and based on extreme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action. Saddam was worried and expected an attack, probably by air and land, but he was not convinced that it would be immediate or overwhelming. His regime expected their neighbours to line up with the US. Saddam knew that regular army morale was poor. Real support for Saddam among the public was probably narrowly based.

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. **Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.** The National Security Council (NSC) had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) said that military planners would brief CENTCOM on 1-2 August, Rumsfeld on 3 August and Bush on 4 August.

The two broad US options were:

- (a) Generated Start. A slow build-up of 250,000 US troops, a short (72 hour) air campaign, then a move up to Baghdad from the south. Lead time of 90 days (30 days preparation plus 60 days deployment to Kuwait).
- (b) Running Start. Use forces already in theatre (3 x 6,000), continuous air campaign, initiated by an Iraqi casus belli. Total lead time of 60 days with the air campaign beginning even earlier. A hazardous option.

The US saw the UK (and Kuwait) as essential, with basing in Diego Garcia

and Cyprus critical for either option. Turkey and other Gulf states were also important, but less vital. The three main options for UK involvement were:

- (i) Basing in Diego Garcia and Cyprus, plus three Special Forces (SF) squadrons.
- (ii) As above, with maritime and air assets in addition.
- (iii) As above, plus a land contribution of up to 40,000, perhaps with a discrete role in Northern Iraq entering from Turkey, tying down two Iraqi divisions.

The Defence Secretary said that the US had already begun ‘spikes of activity’ to put pressure on the regime. No decisions had been taken, but he thought the most likely timing in US minds for military action to begin was January, with the timeline beginning 30 days before the US Congressional elections.

The Foreign Secretary said he would discuss this with Colin Powell this week. It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran. We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in the UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force.

The Attorney-General said that the desire for regime change was not a legal base for military action. There were three possible legal bases: self-defence, humanitarian intervention, or UNSC authorisation. The first and second could not be the base in this case. Relying on UNSCR 1205 of three years ago would be difficult. The situation might of course change.

The Prime Minister said that it would make a big difference politically and legally if Saddam refused to allow in the UN inspectors. Regime change and WMD were linked in the sense that it was the regime that was producing the WMD. There were different strategies for dealing with Libya and Iran. If the political context were right, people would support regime change. The two key issues were whether the military plan worked and whether we had the political strategy to give the military plan the space to work.

On the first, CDS said that we did not know yet if the US battleplan was workable. The military were continuing to ask lots of questions.

For instance, what were the consequences, if Saddam used WMD on day one, or if Baghdad did not collapse and urban warfighting began? You said that Saddam could also use his WMD on Kuwait. Or on Israel, added

the Defence Secretary.

The Foreign Secretary thought the US would not go ahead with a military plan unless convinced that it was a winning strategy. On this, US and UK interests converged. But on the political strategy, there could be US/UK differences. Despite US resistance, we should explore discreetly the ultimatum. Saddam would continue to play hard-ball with the UN.

John Scarlett assessed that Saddam would allow the inspectors back in only when he thought the threat of military action was real.

The Defence Secretary said that if the Prime Minister wanted UK military involvement, he would need to decide this early. He cautioned that many in the US did not think it worth going down the ultimatum route. It would be important for the Prime Minister to set out the political context to Bush.

Conclusions:

- (a) We should work on the assumption that the UK would take part in any military action. But we needed a fuller picture of US planning before we could take any firm decisions. CDS should tell the US military that we were considering a range of options.
- (b) The Prime Minister would revert on the question of whether funds could be spent in preparation for this operation.
- (c) CDS would send the Prime Minister full details of the proposed military campaign and possible UK contributions by the end of the week.
- (d) The Foreign Secretary would send the Prime Minister the background on the UN inspectors, and discreetly work up the ultimatum to Saddam.

He would also send the Prime Minister advice on the positions of countries in the region especially Turkey, and of the key EU member states.

- (e) John Scarlett would send the Prime Minister a full intelligence update.
- (f) We must not ignore the legal issues: the Attorney-General would consider legal advice with FCO/MOD legal advisers.

(I have written separately to commission this follow-up work.)

Matthew Rycroft

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A few days later, Blair sent Bush his written commitment.

28 July 2002

Note on Iraq

I will be with you, whatever. But this is the moment to assess bluntly the difficulties. The planning on this and the strategy are the toughest yet. This is not Kosovo. This is not Afghanistan. It is not even the Gulf War. The military part of this is hazardous but I will concentrate mainly on the political context for success.

Getting rid of Saddam is the right thing to do. He is a potential threat. He could be contained. But containment, as we found with Al Qaida, is always risky. His departure would free up the region. And his regime is probably, with the possible exception of North Korea, the most brutal and inhumane in the world.

The first question is: in removing him, do you want/need a coalition? The US could do it alone, with UK support. The danger is, as ever with these things, unintended consequences. Suppose it got militarily tricky. Suppose Iraq suffered unexpected civilian casualties. Suppose the Arab street finally erupted, e.g. in [REDACTED]. Suppose Saddam felt sufficiently politically strong, if militarily weak in conventional terms, to let off WMD. Suppose that, without any coalition, the Iraqis feel ambivalent about being invaded and real Iraqis, not Saddam's special guard, decide to offer resistance. Suppose, at least, that any difficulties, without a coalition, are magnified and seized upon by a hostile international opinion. If we win quickly, everyone will be our friend. If we don't and they haven't been bound in beforehand, recriminations will start first.

None of these things might happen. But they might, singly or in combination. And there is one other point. We will need to commit to Iraq for the long term. Bedding down a new regime will take time. So, without support, the possibility of unintended consequences will persist through and beyond the military phase.

So, I'm keen on a coalition, not necessarily military but politically.

What Coalition?

I am a little alarmed at the report back I've had from our various officials' meetings in the US. They say everyone over on your side is pretty optimistic that we could neutralise or gain support from most of the Arabs; and that the EU, in particular even the French, but certainly the Italians, Spanish and Germans, would be with us. I have to say that's not my reading. The trouble is, everyone says: they will support action, but they'll

add a rider and the rider is not always sufficiently heard or spoken. The Arabs may support but are far less likely to do so, if the Middle East Peace Process is where it is now. When I met [REDACTED] – and said **we would do Iraq**, he said: ‘fine – just do it with total force’. But when we started later to talk about the MEPP, he said he was far more optimistic about it. ‘Why?’, I asked. ‘Because obviously, with Iraq coming up, the US will put it in a quite different place’, he said. When I said, we couldn’t guarantee that, he looked genuinely shocked. Then Iraq would be a very different proposition, he said.

In my opinion, neither the German or the French, and most probably not the Italians or Spanish either, would support us *without specific UN authority*. Again, they express this by saying ‘yes’ and then adding the rider. But the rider is real. Stoiber might be different from Schroeder, but again I doubt it. In fact, if we launched it in exactly the same state as we are now, there is a chance the French would actively oppose us and start to create real waves inside the EU.

I know the French are anxious to escape their anti-American outlook. I know Berlusconi and Aznar personally strongly support you. Stoiber will be desperate to come on board with the US. But some of them are very tied to specific positions about the UN which they will find it very hard to ditch.

And – here is my real point – public opinion is public opinion. And opinion in the US is quite simply on a different planet from opinion here, in Europe, or in the Arab world.

In Britain, right now I couldn’t be sure of support from Parliament, Party, public or even some of the Cabinet. And this is Britain. In Europe generally, people just don’t have the same sense of urgency post 9/11 as people in the US; they suspect – and are told by populist politicians – that it’s all to do with 43 settling the score with the enemy of 41; and various other extraneous issues like steel etc have soured the atmosphere a little.

At the moment, oddly, our best ally might be Russia!

A Strategy for Achieving a Coalition

Here is what could bring opinion round.

(1) *The UN*

We don’t want to be mucked around by Saddam over this, and the danger is he drags us into negotiation. But we need, as with Afghanistan and the ultimatum to the Taleban, to encapsulate our *casus belli* in some defining way. This is certainly the simplest. We could, in October as the build-up

starts, state that he must let the inspectors back in unconditionally and do so now, ie set a 7-day deadline. It might be backed by a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) or not, depending on what support there was (and I'm not sure anyone, at present, would veto it if Russia was on board). There would be no negotiation. There would be no new talks with Annan. It would be: take it or leave it.

I know there will be reluctance on this. But it would neutralise opposition around the UN issue. If he did say yes, we continue the build-up and we send teams over and the moment he obstructs, we say: he's back to his games. That's it. In any event, **he probably would screw it up** and not meet the deadline, and if he came forward after the deadline, we would just refuse to deal.

(2) *The Evidence*

Again, I have been told the US thinks this unnecessary, but we still need to make the case. If we recapitulate all the WMD evidence; add his attempts to secure nuclear capability; and, as seems possible, add on Al Qaida link, it will be hugely persuasive over here. Plus, of course, the abhorrent nature of the regime. It could be done simultaneously with the deadline.

(3) *MEPP* [Middle East Peace Process]

My judgement is this is essential and whatever the Arabs say at one level, at another this is in the very soul of their attitudes. So it is worth a real effort to get a proper negotiation going. [REDACTED] but at the moment there is no other option. But this negotiation won't start unless someone takes charge of the detail in the negotiation. But for the Arabs, MEPP doesn't have to be settled. It just has to start in earnest.

(4) *Post Saddam*

Suppose we were able to say as follows. Regime change is vital and, in the first instance, it must be one that protects Iraq's territorial integrity and provides stability; and hence might involve another key military figure. But it should lead in time to a democratic Iraq, governed by the people. This would be very powerful. I need advice on whether it's feasible. But just swapping one dictator for another seems inconsistent with our values.

(5) *The Arab/Moslem World*

Some will fall into line. But others won't and others still – Syria and Iran to name but two – might be actively hostile or use it as a means to support

terrorism in Israel. We need a dedicated effort to woo the Arab world, to offer the hardliners a very hard-headed partnership or put them on the ‘axis of evil’ list. But we shouldn’t just leave this to chance and their own (bad) decision-making.

(6) *Afghanistan*

We need this to be going right, not wrong. It is our one act of regime change so far, so it had better be a good advertisement. My hunch is it needs renewed focus and effort.

It goes without saying that the Turks and the Kurds need to be OK. Strangely, I think they are going to be the easiest, despite the Turkish elections. They both want our help badly and will play ball, if offered enough.

I would be happy to try to put all this together, ie to dedicate myself to getting all these elements (1-6) sorted, including involving myself in the MEPP. But it needs a huge commitment in time and energy. So it’s only really worth doing if we are all on the same page.

The Military Plan

Finally, obviously, we must have a workable military plan. I don’t know the details yet, so this is at first blush. The two options are running start and generated start. The first has the advantage of surprise; the second of overwhelming force. My military tell me the risks of heavy losses on the running start make it very risky. Apparently it involves around 15-20,000 troops striking inside Iraq, with heavy air support. The idea would be to catch the regime off balance, strike hard and quickly and get it to collapse. The obvious danger is it doesn’t collapse. And there is the risk of chemical weapons (CW) being used.

For that reason, a generated start seems better. It could always be translated into a more immediate option, should Saddam do something stupid. Also, the build-up of forces in such numbers will be a big signal of serious intent to the region and help to pull people towards us; and demoralise the Iraqis. This option allows us to hammer his air defences and infrastructure; to invade from the south and take the oilfields; to secure the north and protect/stabilise the Kurds. Then effectively with huge force we go on to Baghdad. We would support in any way we can.

On timing, we could start building up after the break. A strike date could be Jan/Feb next year. But the crucial issue is not when, but how.

On 12 September 2002, President Bush addressed the UN General Assembly about Iraq, which elicited this handwritten note from Prime Minister Blair:

Dear George,

It was a brilliant speech. It puts us on exactly the right strategy to get the job done. The reception has been very positive with everyone now challenged to come up to the mark. Well done.

Yours ever,
Tony

* * *

No weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq. The Iraqis always insisted they had none, and informed the UN that this was the case in December 2002, when they submitted the ‘currently accurate, full and complete declaration’ of their weapons of mass destruction, as required by Security Council resolution 1441. The full declaration was given only to the five permanent members of the Security Council, with the ten non-permanent members receiving a much redacted version. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), which also received the full declaration, confirmed to Ken Coates of the Russell Foundation in a letter dated 3 May 2003 that ‘Dissemination of information ... in particular those regarding the suppliers, could have an impact on confidentiality and could discourage the necessary cooperation, on the part of suppliers and individuals, required for UNMOVIC’s verification activities’. All five permanent members of the UN Security Council were thought to have supplied weapons, equipment and other services and materials to Iraq in the past. (See Peace Dossier, Spokesman 81, 2004). Prime Minister Blair, in a note to No 10 officials dated 16 December 2002, said of the declaration, ‘The test will be to prove it is false’. He never did.

... 2. Iraq

At present there is an Iraqi declaration, plainly inconsistent with our intelligence. The test will be to prove it is false. I need a report on Blix’s modus operandi and to see him late this week or early January if at all possible. We also need to build the whole issue of WMD and show its importance. Alastair Campbell (AC) to do a communications note on this amplifying his earlier one this weekend. But studying the Iraqi declaration, it is hard to see how conflict can be avoided, unless Saddam starts to

behave honestly. My sense of Russia and France is that albeit reluctantly, they accept this and will support a new Resolution if the breach by Saddam is clear and significant.

* * *

Tony Blair returned to the Iraqi declaration in a further note to No. 10 officials dated 4 January 2003. He needed an early meeting with 'C', head of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), who had described how the 'intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy' in the 'Downing Street Memo' of 23 July 2002. Was something similar in the works closer to home? Enter 'Report X', which Dr Jones of Defence Intelligence wasn't allowed to see. (See Spokesman 114.)

Iraq

We start from behind. People suspect US motives; don't accept Saddam is a threat; worry it will make us a target. Yet the truth is removing Saddam is right; he is a threat; and WMD has to be countered. So there is a big job of persuasion. We need the following in place:

(1) most obviously, the evidence of breach of the UN Resolution leading hopefully to a new Resolution. Time is short. We need either evidence of actual WMD; or documentation concealed; or an eye-witness account of the programme. We are making efforts on all three. But one or more need to be in place. [REDACTED] our biggest hindrance, is the intimidation Saddam is exercising. Those who might co-operate are being told very clearly their families will die. So even though we all know the Declaration of the 8th December is a lie, proving the lie will be hard. I need an early meeting on this with 'C'...

* * *

On 30 January 2003, Blair wrote again to Bush setting out a final timetable.

Countdown

Now: Blix put a series of questions/demands to Saddam.

14 February: Blix reports for second time

28 February: Blix reports for third time

Each time harder on non-cooperation, preferable with Blix's judgement on

28 February that he sees no signs of Iraq fully cooperating and that inspectors cannot disarm unless there is full cooperation.

By 5 March new UN discussion and resolution: authorising action; or at least declaring Iraq in material breach.

Saudis then given 10 days to mobilise Arab opinion to try to force Saddam out.

15 March: military action begins.

All this shortened if either dramatic find by Blix or 14 February report sufficiently hard; lengthened, but not beyond end March, if Resolution takes more time.

Military Questions

Have we sound plans for the following:

1. Saddam use of WMD against US and/or his own people
2. Saddam attack on Israel
3. Saddam destruction of oil wells
4. Keeping apart rival groups and tribes
5. Avoiding civilian casualties

Aftermath Questions

1. What happens immediately: a new Iraqi government or US run?
2. What type of Iraqi government are we aiming for medium term?

Blix

- Very good intelligence given
- Close working
- Persuasion of doctrine of non-cooperation
- Tie-in with El Baradei
- To be seen by key coalition leaders including TB and GWB prior to 14 February

Related issues

1. Afghanistan – renewed push; treat drugs eradication seriously; extend ISAF; boost Karzai; rein in Pakistan
2. MEPP – in context of a more stable Middle East and responsible Iraq, MEPP progress more possible and desirable in any event
3. HIV/AIDS and Poverty

4. N. Korea
5. US/EU relations – build on the joint letter and reach out to where majority of Europe wants to be
6. Oil

Diplomacy

- Intensive work on all UNSC members.
- Russia to be courted and brought fully on board; ditto China.
- Way down found for France.
- EU non-aligned brought to our position.
- Germany to be given extended Afghan role and some rapprochement.
- Iraqi Opposition given prominence.
- Arab world courted and alerted to their role post 2nd Resolution.

Strategy

- Proper communications operation.
- Joint working for rest of the plans.
- Regular updates between principals, with clear and set agenda.

* * *

Blair sent a further 'note' to Bush 19 February 2003.

The stakes are now much higher. It is apparent to me from the EU summit that France wants to make this a crucial test: is Europe America's partner or competitor? Germany – for reasons we know – is bound in to France. For the first time, however, there is emerging a strong bloc prepared to challenge France and Germany. This comprises Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Holland, Ireland and Portugal. In addition, the Swedes and Finns – though temperamentally anti-war – are worried that Europe pulling away from the US will leave them at the mercy of Russia. **The EU accession countries are with the US but are being pressed hard by France and Germany.**

In my view, we are looking at a defining moment in EU/US relations and in the future direction of Europe. The advantage the French have, however, is European public opinion, which seems to favour them. So they are using that to embarrass the pro-US case, to inhibit the pro-US leaders. These leaders are, it has to be said, remarkably firm in the face of really difficult polls and demonstrations.

But the issue will be this: is it the US that is forced to go it alone with the UK; or is it France that is left isolated with a choice as to whether to use its veto?

That in turn is a function of where public opinion is outside of the US. In respect of that, opinion is far more nuanced than people think. In my judgement, people are not against conflict in all circumstances. What they fear is that we are hell bent on war, come what may, that we don't really want the UN to succeed. It's absurd, given 12 years of waiting and UNSCR 1441 but there it is.

The issue of time for the Inspections has become vicariously, the focus for this sentiment. At the heart of this is a confusion between active and passive co-operation. The duty on Saddam is to co-operate fully, i.e. actively to help the Inspectors. If he isn't he's in breach. But the France/Germany view – too much shared by others on the UN Security Council – is that the Inspectors should have the time they need to 'sniff out' the weapons as Schroeder put it on Monday night; and all Saddam needs to do is to offer passive co-operation, i.e. the absence of obstruction. Obviously if this is right, they could be there for months or years. **Our view, which is correct, is that time is irrelevant unless he is co-operating fully and actively.** If he isn't, the time needed is just the time necessary to make a judgement as to his co-operation: is it full or not? And actually no one, including France and Germany, is seriously suggesting Saddam is co-operating fully.

Blix, unfortunately, embodies this confusion. His report on 14 February never suggested there was full co-operation; indeed the opposite. But its tone of writing seemed to imply that because Saddam was co-operating more on process, that was an improvement despite the fact that there was no co-operation on substance. However, the most recent conversations we have had with Blix show that he is aware of this problem, and is prepared to countenance a definitive judgement and was shocked at how negatively for the US/UK his report was spun. Take that as you will. **My faith in Blix is somewhat shaken.** But he remains key.

So: the trick we need to take is this: we have to find a way of refocusing the issue on the absence of full co-operation by Saddam; and do so in a way that pulls public opinion and the UNSC waverers back to us by showing that we have indeed made every effort to avoid war. In my judgement the waverers need this to justify shifting. And for us in Europe it is vital in altering the state of our opinion. My proposal is as follows.

1. We put down a new UN Resolution soon, probably early next week. That Resolution is simple and clear and as easy to vote for as we can make it.
2. We say we will put it to a vote on 14 March, the date France has suggested for a meeting of Foreign Ministers. That then becomes the deadline for action.
3. At the same time as we put it down, we define the categories of full co-

operation. We do this – not in the Resolution but in a side statement, based on what was in 1441. This should include the works, everything, not a detailed list of items but of areas: full disclosure of the 1998 leftovers; witnesses interviewed outside Iraq; destruction of the rocket motors etc. It should be sufficient if he did it, to amount to a complete and total capitulation by Saddam. That is the ultimatum.

4. We tie in Blix to accept that this is indeed what must happen; or at least not to contradict it. I have fixed up a call on a secure line with him tomorrow and could take him through it and assess the chances.
5. We say that failure in any respect to meet this test, will amount to non-co-operation; that this is a final attempt by us to disarm Saddam peacefully; that by 14 March, it will be 4 months since 1441, quite long enough to assess whether he is co-operating or not.
6. We work like crazy next week to get the UNSC members to agree or at least not oppose this strategy; and then build the support to carry a majority for 14 March.

The disadvantages of this:

- (a) **He might conceivably comply fully** – but the chances of this, according to all the intelligence are minimal. And if he does, it would still amount to a huge humiliation.
- (b) He may ‘seem’ to comply. But this is a risk in any event and by defining non-compliance so clearly, we minimise the chances of ambiguity.
- (c) **It may delay the start of military action by a week.** But this is not long and the blunt truth is that by next Friday i.e. the 28th February or even a week later the 7th March, the chances of securing 9 votes are very slim. A week’s wait is worth a Resolution; or at least a majority on the UNSC.

The advantages are:

- (a) It puts us in the driving seat, with a clear deadline and ultimatum.
- (b) It refocuses the debate where it should be i.e. on his duty fully to co-operate.
- (c) It gives the doubters a reason to sign up.
- (d) It helps the Arab world come on board.
- (e) It accepts the French date, so prevents them from quarrelling over the time.
- (f) It allows us to show the world we are going to war, not because we want to, but because we have to.

Above all, it shows the US reaching out, understanding concerns, but still firmly willing to act. It sets the UN a fundamental test. It gives the Europeans something to rally round. When we do act, it will show we went the last mile for peace. A successful second resolution would be an enormous success for your diplomacy over the last few months.

I have never come across an issue in which the dividing line between overwhelming support and overwhelming opposition is so slender. In Britain – which has been reasonably typical of European opinion on this – we have actually had considerable success in our arguments. Large majorities believe Saddam is a threat and needs disarming. The same believe that without the threat of action, he wouldn't disarm. Again large majorities believe in military action if there is a new UN Resolution or even without a Resolution if we had a majority of the UNSC with us, i.e. France could veto and we could still do it. Around 80% support an ultimatum and though they support more time for inspections, they acknowledge that inspections can only work if Saddam co-operates. Yet a majority oppose action now. The only explanation for this is that they need to be persuaded that we would prefer peaceful disarmament if that were possible. Proving it isn't possible is the huge benefit of the ultimatum route.

Two further thoughts. Publishing the MEPP Roadmap would have a massive impact in Europe and the Arab world. As ever, the salience of this just can't be overstated. Interestingly, a group of international Christian clergy I met yesterday, including American Bishops said this would make a big difference to their attitude on Iraq.

Secondly, we need to start firming up the humanitarian work for the aftermath of the conflict. There is a lot of work going on, but we should start to surface it and show how we will protect and improve the lives of Iraqi people.

* * *

On 26 March 2003, days after the invasion of Iraq commenced, Blair sent this note to Bush. There had been no second UN Resolution.

The Fundamental Goal

This is the moment when you can define international politics for the next generation: the true post-cold war world order. **Our ambition is big:** to construct a global agenda around which we can unite the world; rather than dividing it into rival centres of power.

Your insight, which no-one has articulated better or more clearly is that

post 9/11 our security is best guaranteed not just through traditional military and intelligence means but by our values. More freedom in the world means more security. Countries that are free and democratic are countries unlikely to threaten us. The terrorists and rogue states, however different in origin, come together in hatred of our values because those values represent the opposite of dictatorial states and extremist Islamic terrorists who want to Talibanise the world. They don't hate the US by accident. They hate it for what it stands for.

So our fundamental goal is to spread our values of freedom, democracy, tolerance and the rule of law, but we need a broad based agenda capable of unifying the world, to get it. That's why, though Iraq's WMD is the immediate justification for action, **ridding Iraq of Saddam is the real prize.**

The Problem

The problem is that a ludicrous and distorted view of the US is clouding the enormous attraction of the fundamental goal. In the past weeks I have had conversations with intelligent Europeans which has vividly illustrated this for me. **A European leader who seriously compared Don Rumsfeld with Bin Laden.** Another who said how deplorable it would be to see the US system of government in Arab countries. 'Why?' I asked, 'most Arabs would love to be able to elect their own government, protest if they don't like it, and vote them out; and anyway, isn't such a democratic system our system too?'

I talked to another, who to be fair, was completely panicked by some Europeans telling him they wanted to substitute the relationship with the US for one with Russia. **In other words, rational people are behaving very stupidly.**

Europe is the immediate focus of this problem. But it is not confined to Europe. We have to ask how, when we put real pressure on Mexico and Chile, they didn't come along; why Russia felt it could muck about so graphically; why **Turkey turned down \$6 billion of aid they needed.**

The problem is we're not communicating with the rest of the world in a way they understand. They get wholly warped views of the so-called right in American politics, played back through their media; until we end up with the **fatuous irony** of millions of liberal-minded people taking to the streets, effectively to defend the most illiberal regime on earth.

The solution

Keep the policy; broaden the agenda and change the presentation. People want to feel and see the US reaching out, explaining, trying to seek a

collective way through, even if it can't always be achieved. People need to see you as you are. No-one doubts the toughness. They need to see the sensibility. We need a strategy for this *after* the conflict is won. Doing it now would look like weakness. Afterwards it will look like magnanimity, from a position of strength, recognising the past months have not been as we wanted it. I believe, done right, you could then get the international community to accept your agenda. In their hearts, they know it is right, just as they know the US is a great as well as a powerful nation, but they want to do it, feeling they've been part of it.

Europe, Russia and the US

We don't gain anything by pretence. There has been a falling out. It has been serious. We need to put it back together, but on an honest basis. People can have partnership or rival poles of power. They can't have both so we need to be explicit. We need to herald a different way of working for the future. And there needs to be some way of signifying it tangibly.

What has happened is that Germany got stuck with a tactic that became a strategy that became a world view, the French took advantage of it to raise the banner of Gaullism and the Russians saw a chance and reverted to type. In opinion poll terms it has been intoxicating. They are now contemplating the hangover. But they're not hungover yet. They're still hoping we fail.

Again I don't think we make any major overtures until it is clear victory will be on our terms. Any rapprochement should be clearly defined. This really shouldn't happen again. They've not treated us as strategic partners. They have grandstanded, gameplayed and had we not been determined, would have knocked us off this altogether.

To unpick the coalition, I would not start with Russia but with Germany. Their lapse was a personal decision of a political leader. Not a 'system' decision. Russia and France took 'system' decisions. *But* Germany should not come back just bilaterally with the US; but should bring Europe with it, i.e. Germany should stand up to France visibly in coming back. This is essential to give a message not just to France but to the rest of Europe.

France can then be brought back – there is no point in permanently alienating them; they will cause too much trouble [REDACTED]. The UK and France have also got to have it out about the US and France be encouraged to modernise Gaullism so that the nonsense of the past weeks stops. The UK can do this from a position of strength with the Germans on board.

Once Russia knows it can no longer play games between Europe and the US it will go back to wanting to work with US i.e. they should be asked to join the same table as the US and the EU; not flit between two separate tables. But this episode should have given us a reality check on how ‘modern’ Russia really is. We can be fooled by Putin’s intelligence and his undoubted western leanings into thinking Russia is some type of western democracy. Not yet, not by a long way. So: we reconstitute the partnership but remove their capacity to play us off and keep our eyes open.

So in general afterwards, there should be an attempt to reach a clear understanding (a) it shouldn’t happen again and (b) we share the same agenda, which must include resolute action against WMD and terrorism.

I think it is worth considering once this diplomacy is under way you doing a major speech about the transatlantic alliance in Europe that spells out the US desire for a strategic partnership and what that means. I even wonder whether it is worth meeting European leaders (including the new countries) to put it all together visually and therefore sending a clear message to Russia that their coalition was only ever virtual.

Also we are ignoring the vital importance of economics in all this. Over the past few weeks it has been French and German business leaders who have been most worried by the falling out with the US. They are big investors in the US now. US/EU economic ties are massive. Why not make one part of this an agreement to start on removing all tariffs to business and non-tariff barriers? A big US/EU economic push would bind Europe economically to the US and make a real difference to attitudes, besides adding to our GDP.

The Agenda

- (1) I simply repeat, boringly, the MEPP is the test for the rest of the world. It would remove 70 per cent of the anti-US feeling at a stroke. I will help in any way I can.
- (2) Terrorism and WMD. We need to educate people better of the WMD risks, to develop strategies for each of the WMD countries (see below).
- (3) We should become champions of WTO progress – it’s a big thing for the developing world.
- (4) We need to take forward your moves on Africa and global poverty.
- (5) The US needs to find a way – and I think it is through science and technology – of agreeing the climate change ends but facing the world up to the reality of the means, i.e. not by inhibiting growth but by developing the technologies.

Detail(1) *Europe*

In addition to the breaking up of the coalition against us, it will be vital (a) to reward and treat well those in Europe that have helped; they've done so with huge courage and mustn't feel that once the tough stuff is done, we're just making friends with the others, and (b) **the accession 10, who will be full members of the EU this time next year, have been really supportive.** *But* do not underestimate the harsh intimidation they've been subjected to. They've virtually been told that by siding with the US they're against Europe. Though holding firm, they've been badly rattled. That is so in spades for Bulgaria and Romania. France and Germany must be told in terms not to play games with their accession and the 10 should be very specifically thanked. The danger is – should this arise another time – they'll be less willing. However, the upside is: if we can solidify them, they will change dramatically the balance of power in Europe viz the attitude to the US. **This is of enormous, long-term strategic importance.**

(2) *Syria, Iran and Libya*

They are watching carefully to see whether we mean what we say re Iraq. Once they know it's over for Saddam there is an opportunity to give them a choice: cooperate on WMD or face isolation and in time, worse. Libya has made advances. We shouldn't be over-optimistic. Gaddafi plays these games. On the other hand, it is worth putting it up to them: they should do a private deal first, then work out how to announce it publicly. They should give up all WMD; declare what they have; declare how they developed it (and that might include the links with Iraqi nuclear scientists); and work with us to destroy it.

I then favour, in the context of the MEPP advancing, giving Bashar and the Iranians a very clear choice: to stop supporting terrorism and scrap their WMD. The Iranian programme is really alarming. But they will want to know that if they comply they will get a new US relationship. And they will need the cover of progress on the MEPP to have any chance of selling this to their system.

(3) *N. Korea*

They are mad and bad. We need a two stage process (a) to bring them back into some sort of deal to cease proliferating. This should be done multilaterally, though, of course in the end that implies a new US relationship and (b) over time, we should have a strategy for collapsing their regime by external pressure, opening it up to the South and

propaganda. The sheer madness of the regime is a threat; and we shouldn't be beguiled into thinking that an agreement on WMD, though necessary, is a long term cure.

(4) *WMD*

I am absolutely convinced that we need a plan to disrupt the trade in this, expose it publicly, [REDACTED] etc who are perpetrating it. This needs to become utterly unrespectable in every form.

(5) *MEPP*

The truth is the opposite of what it seems. The terrorist and rogue states, despite claiming the Palestinian cause, would loath progress on MEPP. The absence of it is the best card they've got. [REDACTED]. The terrorists use it as an exemplar of Western hypocrisy.

As for Israel, we have to divide it into two camps. Those that want a settlement but now doubt the Palestinians are serious partners; and those who believe, in their heart of hearts, that the [REDACTED].

Again your insight of involving the Arab world is right. They have to bear the heat of a deal collectively.

But the degree of cynicism is enormous. They don't really believe you can deliver a new process. On the other hand, what happened in London leading to Abu Mazen's appointment shows it can be done.

The two steps necessary are a specific agreement on security; and then a new conference to re-start it all. Announcing those, along with the implementation of the promise on the Roadmap, will be transformative. And in Israel, it will reconstitute a body of moderate opinion who will support a renewed push for peace if they think it is credible and has US support and new Palestinian leadership.

I will help, if you want me to. In the right circumstances I think I could get the Labour Party back into coalition with Sharon and the EU to fund reconstruction. I would host any meeting you wish.

(6) *The Arab World*

Let's be clear. Their ultimate instability – dangerous to us – is lack of democracy and a volatile mix of the religious and political. We have to construct a medium/long term strategy to open up these countries to freedom and democracy. Obviously it has to be done with care. But it's the only safe solution for the future.

(7) *REDACTED*

(8) *Terrorism*

The more I reflect on it, the more this, together with WMD, constitutes an entirely new phenomenon of threat. It's a security threat that doesn't arise from military equivalence; but from a modern world in which technology can deliver great destruction; in which the modern media then plays that vividly into public opinion and then consequences arise wholly disproportionate to the original act. It makes terrorism very powerful. Defeating it requires us to construct a global agenda around which sensible nations can unite; and making any state that sponsors it feel real heat. Explicit agreement on this should be part of our agenda with Europe and Russia.

(9) *REDACTED*(10) *The UN and G8*

The shortcomings of the UN have been painfully exposed. But it is still seen, for all its faults, as the legitimate voice of the international community. The trouble with any proposal for reforming it is that it runs into a myriad of conflicting and therefore blocking interests. But it is worth working on achieving, finally, some UNSC reform.

I also ask: is the G8 in its present form sensible? It certainly isn't logical. Again we need to work out a proposal. And you have the chair next year and a chance to change it.

* * *

Some months later, on 5 October 2003 in his note to Bush, Blair shifted his ground as the mistakes in Iraq began to pile up.

It may be odd for a Labour Prime Minister and a Republican President to have a common political interest, but we do!

What's our problem? Iraq on the ground is tough. We lose our people to terrorist attacks. We haven't found enough on WMD. So two things happen. Our public wonders whether it was all worth it or even worse is persuaded we misled them. And in the international community there is a sense of Schadenfreude. Bush and Blair started it. It's their problem, let them sort it. Hence, the present situation in the UN. And Syria, Iran, North Korea and others sense we are weaker and so they can play around.

We need a coherent strategy to get us back on the high ground and get the public, at home and abroad, to focus on the big picture. Because let us be very clear. If we lose this battle the world will be less

safe. The ability of the US and its allies to influence the world will be diminished. And we will be in the crazy situation where those whose policy would have meant Saddam still in power, seem morally superior to those who removed him. So what do we need?

- (1) *Iraq*. I still think our decision making is too slow. I don't mean only in Iraq. I mean between Washington, London, and Baghdad. It has a feel to me of something too *ad hoc*, too lost in different bits of Government, not drawn together, and driven through. Also there are key issues that require our political input and judgment, that get left to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the Government departments. We are making progress in Iraq. But we could do more if there was a better sense, between us, of the decisions which are vital, of the blockages and how we take the one and remove the other.
- (1) And our communication strategy – not simply in Iraq but with us – is still not as tough and clear as it could be
- (2) *UN*. A new resolution helps us with donors at Madrid; with the politics, and in the wider world. So let us try to get one. But – unusually for me – I have reservations. I want a resolution *only* at the right price. The reason the UN is difficult is the reason I give above. Those that wanted us to fail in the war want us to fail in the peace. Until we do better in Iraq, they won't help much. I may be wrong, but I don't think so. And I am allergic to any notion that either (a) weakens the efficiency of our operation in Iraq or (b) has us asking others to 'sort out our mess'.

Iraq is now a battle for legitimacy. It will determine the spirit of the future world. It's why we have to win and *on our terms*.

- (3) *WMD*. This is all getting lost just in Iraq and WMD. But this was always about more than that. It was about a global threat. The starting place was Iraq because of the history. But the reason for action was never Iraq in isolation. **It was Iraq as a test case of how determined we were to confront the threat.** My worry now is that the world thinks: well, Iraq was a tough deal, so they won't try that again.
- (3) I think we have to be absolutely unapologetic. This is the security threat. We must deal with it. This means:
 - (3) (a) The Libya deal is *really* important. That would hugely change the atmospherics. This is worth real time and energy to get it and our teams need to know that.

- (3) (b) [REDACTED]
- (3) (c) A public disruption of the trade in WMD would be a tremendous reminder of what we're up against. Why not do a major thing on this? People need to know why we're worried. At present they don't.
- (4) *The wider agenda.* As ever, the view of us on terrorism and WMD is contaminated by concerns on other issues. And these issues matter to us, in any event, substantially and politically.
- (3) (a) We should be the ones reactivating the WTO – that would give us a lot of suasion everywhere.
- (3) (b) Carry on with MEPP. I still think the weakness is the lack of an independent, credibly monitored, security plan – the ones in place at the moment have no credibility. If you constructed the plan, got the Quartet to back it and presented it on a pre-prepared basis to Israel and the Palestinians, it mightn't work but it would give us a chance and above all, it would force the world to confront the fact that the problem is terrorism. The Israelis may be intransigent but whilst the terrorism is not properly confronted, the intransigence is inevitable.
- (3) (c) Climate change. You can't change on Kyoto. But you could say it's time to tackle this in a different way and you will make this an issue for you in 2004 at the G8 and us in 2005. Africa also.

Way Forward

- (1) A regular, even weekly stocktake on Iraq with an agenda agreed by Nigel and Condi, so we can remove any blockages and give direction.
- (2) A strategic plan to re-highlight the terrorism/WMD issue, including Libya, Iran and North Korea and the world trade in WMD.
- (3) Start work on a common agenda that is non-security but could be part of your November visit. So this becomes not about Iraq alone but a comprehensible world view.
- (4) **Get our confidence in our story back.** Iraq is better without Saddam. WMD/terror remains the 21st century threat. Our global agenda is the only way to a better future not just for us but for the world. We're not going soft on it. We're going to be utterly determined on it, because it's right.

I don't know about you. But my political position is very clear. I won't win re-election on Iraq alone. But if Iraq is wrong or people don't get the security threat, it will be a major problem. On the other hand, if Iraq comes

right and people do get the threat, my opponents will have a lot of explaining to do.

And by this time next year, it better be going right, not wrong. For us and the world!

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In April 2004, the world saw the first images of abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners by US personnel at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. Years of suffering, death and destruction for the people of Iraq were to follow, with no end in sight still. Many service people died and more were injured. Blair's 'to-do' lists for Bush may or may not have gone largely unremarked or unread in the White House, but the consequences of their joint misadventures in Iraq continue to threaten the peace of the world.

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A Case to Answer

