

SECRET LUK SSSS EY
DECLASSIFIED



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone

Tom McKane

Defence and Overseas Secretariat

NRd 013/001/01		
RECEIVED BY COUNTRY		
11 APR 2001		
DESK	PA	REGISTRY
INDEX		Section Taken

TO6445

17 January 2001

Alan Goulty, CMG
Director Middle East & North Africa
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

King Charles Street SW1

pa

063/4

Dear Alan.

IRAQ

I thought it would be helpful to record the main points from this morning's discussion.

Contacts with the new US team (Washington telnos 45 and 51)

2. John Sawers reported on his discussions with Colin Powell and Condi Rice. It is clear that the new team, whilst firmly committed to a robust strategy of containment, is thinking afresh about the best mix of policies to sustain that strategy for the long term and keep the pressure on Saddam.

3. On sanctions, Powell and Rice appear to be thinking in terms of a "narrower but deeper" régime – ie, rigorous enforcement of the arms embargo, of import controls on military and dual-use equipment, and of controls on revenues; coupled with relaxation of non-essential sanctions.

4. On the No Fly Zones, the new team is clearly not wedded to the status quo, but understands the need for a militarily coherent approach, and would not want any change of tack to be misinterpreted as "going soft". However Saddam's cage is eventually redefined, the US will want to respond severely to any transgression.

DECLASSIFIED

5. On the Iraqi opposition, Rice at least believes they still have a role to play, but does not harbour great illusions about their credibility or effectiveness.

6. On process and timescales, it is clear that the new Administration does not have a blueprint but will review policy in the course of this year, and will consult us. In the meantime we agreed that **FCO and UKMis should ensure, perhaps including via a message from the Foreign Secretary (and, if necessary, the Prime Minister), that Annan does not jump the gun and present the US with a putative "deal" before they are ready.**

Future Military Options (Simon Webb's letter of 12 January)

7. The main points arising from discussion of the MOD paper were:

- a. Our ability to strike at Saddam's WMD facilities depends upon intelligence.

Iraqi obstruction

of UNMOVIC would of course provide some clues, and a justification for military action: but this was a card that could only be played once. Overall, the practical value in the WMD context of getting UNMOVIC into Iraq was debatable, particularly if concessions had to be made to secure it.

- b. From a military perspective it might be possible adequately to monitor the NNFZ without actually patrolling it. This would not, however, remove the need – for reasons of deterrence and the ability, if required, to respond to serious Iraqi aggression against the Kurds – to retain forces based at Incirlik. This option, or variants on it, would need to be negotiated with the Turks, not least to ensure that training needs could be met.

- c. In the SNFZ, a cessation of patrolling would mean relying entirely on satellites for early warning of an Iraqi move against Kuwait. Current contingency plans envisaged the use of coalition aircraft for the attrition of Iraqi forces as they deployed southwards, buying time to reinforce Kuwait itself. These plans would be significantly more difficult to execute if there were any delay in, or ambiguity about, early

warning of Iraqi movements (eg, due to satellite unavailability); and if the Iraqis had exploited a cessation of patrolling by redeploying air defence assets in the NFZ. It was also clear that the Kuwaitis and Saudis attached great importance to the SNFZ. We agreed that **MOD would look at possible options in consultation with the US. The options might include reductions in coalition patrols and responses; a reversion to the original size of the SNFZ; a reliance instead on "active deterrence" in some form;**

; and a defence plan for Kuwait, with a legal basis in Article 51 of the UN Charter, that did not depend upon the SNFZ.

- d. The Attorney General was reviewing the legal justification for the NFZs, in consultation with FCO, MOD and Cabinet Office. We agreed that **LSLO would ensure that this work did not close off any of the options that would now be considered with the US.**
- e. On sanctions, the important points from a conventional military perspective were to prevent Iraq from obtaining modern weapon systems and to maintain revenue controls sufficient to prevent the rapid reconstitution of large and effective armed forces. A "narrower but deeper" régime, if it could be made effective, would be consistent with this. We agreed that **FCO would discuss sanctions with the US, to see if we and they could agree on the details of such a régime.**

Media Handling

8. We noted that MOD planned a background briefing for journalists. We agreed that it was important not to encourage premature speculation about possible policy options, and that the focus should be on the character and conduct of the Iraqi régime.

Future Process

9. We noted that at some point we would need to begin to draw all these threads together for Ministers, but that we needed first to make progress in our discussions with the US. I envisage meeting again in a month or so, subject to developments.

SECRET UKR ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

10. I am copying this to those who attended the meeting, and to Robert Cooper here.

Yours,
Tom

TOM McKANE

DECLASSIFIED