

*William Patey, MED*

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*Foreign Secretary*

*Rush*

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*AT*

From: William Patey, Head/MED  
Date: 12 February 2002

cc: PS/Mr Bradshaw  
PS/PUS  
Mr Wright  
Mr Ricketts  
Mr Fry  
Mr Ehrman  
Heads: UND, CFSPD  
News, NPD, Planners  
Rob Macaire, Washington  
Carne Ross, UKMIS New York  
Paris  
Moscow  
HMAs Riyadh, Kuwait, Amman  
Cairo, Damascus

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*So far so good. But much will depend on how the US decide to pursue*

*Alan Goulty*

PS

*the regime change option. It would be helpful if I and Mr Patey could be kept up to speed on discussions with the US: hard to write contingency planning paper in ignorance of the contingencies we are planning for.*

#### IRAQ: NEXT STEPS

1. The Secretary of State may find it helpful to have a note on next steps on Iraq following our talks last week with the Americans and the French.
2. In the absence of any decisions on wider Iraq policy and the post-11 September situation, the immediate US focus is on getting the Goods Review List (GRL) agreed by the 30 May deadline.
3. Further US/Russian discussions were held on 6/7 February and we met with the US negotiator John Wolf in Paris on Friday 8 February for a debrief. This time the Russians were ready to talk business and Wolf was pleased with the progress they made. The Russians did not make any linkage with clarification of 1284 (anathema to the US) but made it clear that they want a GRL deal in exchange for release of US holds on Russian contracts. The US are planning to release a further tranche of contracts this week. More bilateral exchanges are planned for later this month and Wolf is looking to conclude the negotiations by mid-March. This is one of the issues they want to have resolved before the forthcoming US/Russia Summit in May.
4. We suggested to Wolf that if agreement was reached in March we might seal this with an immediate resolution which would bring the new system into effect on 1 June. This would give the UN the necessary time in which to set up the

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infrastructure for dealing with the revised GRL system, thereby ensuring a smooth transition. Wolf thought this a good idea. Agreement by mid-March may be optimistic but if the Americans succeed this would suggest the following timetable:

- 20/21 February – further US/Russian bilateral discussions
  - mid-March – US agreement with Russians on the GRL
  - late March – UNSCR decides that GRL should be adopted with an implementation date of 1 June
  - April/May – UN puts necessary infrastructure in place – provides guidance to exporters
  - 1 June – new system begins.
5. As for the wider policy all the signs point to the US going for a regime change option. But there does not appear to be a viable plan as yet and the time frame remains uncertain. Cheney is due to tour the Gulf in mid-March and we would be surprised if any decisions were taken before that. We have asked Washington for a further read-out of US thinking beyond State Department.
6. Jean Felix Paganon, French UN Director, was in Washington just before us and his reading of American intentions is the same as ours. This appears to have produced a change in French attitudes towards 1284 and the prospects of clarification. Paganon now sees Security Council agreement on a tough inspection regime with unconditional access as the only realistic alternative to US military action. He is no longer talking about making concessions or providing incentives for Iraqi co-operation. If this reflects a considered French position and they can be persuaded to help bring the Russians along, this could offer the prospect of P5 agreement on clarification.
7. The US are reluctant to go down the road of clarification, fearing that it represents a slippery slope towards a weaker inspection regime. If we can get agreement on tough regime this would represent a no-lose situation. If the Iraqis continue to resist a tough inspection regime or let the inspectors in and then renege, the justification for any subsequent military action would be much stronger. If, against all expectations, UNMOVIC were allowed to do their job this would offer the best prospect of dealing with Iraq's WMD.
8. I have briefed Peter Ricketts who will take an opportunity to sound out Errera and Rodman in the margins of the G8 meeting.

  
William Patey

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