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Carey

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TCL

NO. 0057

DAVID MANNING

cc Tom McKane ✓
Tom Dodd

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IRAQ

Tom Dodd and I have been talking to the FCO and MOD about Iraq. We plan similar conversations with SIS and DFID. We are trying to find a date for a quick meeting with you. It might be helpful to set out in very broad terms where we think we are.

Current Policy: Containment

2. This has the following elements:

- **Sanctions.** Partially effective, despite considerable smuggling, particularly of oil. Iraq is prevented from rebuilding its conventional military capabilities to pre-Gulf War levels, but some slow progress. Saddam likely to be pursuing WMD programmes, but our intelligence is limited. Iraqi people poorer through Saddam's policies, not sanctions main reason.
- **Travel restrictions.** Generally enforced, but do not prevent Iraqi diplomatic initiatives.
- **No fly zones.** Generally successful in preventing flying in the restricted areas. Post 11 September US/UK planes flying fewer patrols, but Saddam is not challenging them for now. On the other hand he is improving his air defence capability. To take this out would require significant attacks, including on facilities in the suburbs of Baghdad outside the southern no fly zone.

What next?

3. Carry on containing:

- tighten the no fly zones, take out the new air defence systems;
- change the operation of the sanctions regime to focus more clearly on WMD and arms by introducing the Goods Review List. FCO think the US will persuade the Russians to approve by end May

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deadline. But this will have limited impact on Saddam's WMD efforts; and

- move towards clarification of UNSCR 1284. Get weapons inspectors back in to try to control WMD. Be prepared to respond militarily if there are major finds, or the inspectors' work is frustrated.
4. Go for the military option now. This could involve either:
- bomb plus stimulate an uprising in the South and/or Kurdish areas. FCO don't think this will get rid of Saddam. Legal difficulties for us; or
 - bomb and invade. Would require several hundred thousand ground troops and months of diplomatic and military preparation. More legal difficulties for us.
5. The US position is critical. There is plenty of press speculation and third hand reporting from embassies about US intentions. Probably they do not yet have a plan, and could be reluctant to share with us because they believe we are firmly set on containment. The Cheney visit to the Gulf next month may be important in gauging opinion. Iraq will no doubt be on the agenda for the visit to Crawford. We are planning a Whitehall meeting in early March. Before then, how should we be trying to get a better handle on US intentions?
6. It is debatable which of the options gets US/UK troops out of Saudi Arabia quickest!

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