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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

S 304/02

From the Private Secretary

17 October 2002

Dear Peter

### IRAQ: UK MILITARY OPTIONS

The Prime Minister discussed UK military options for Iraq with the Defence and Foreign Secretaries and CDS on 17 October. Jonathan Powell, Sally Morgan, Alastair Campbell, David Manning and I were also present. This letter is extremely sensitive. It must be seen only by those with a real need to know its contents, and must not be copied further.

The Defence Secretary and CDS set out the options, as in the Defence Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister of 15 October. CDS put the military arguments for agreeing to Package 3. But if we were to end up agreeing on Package 2, it would be better to tell the US now. The Foreign Secretary said that the international case for Package 3 was strong.

The Prime Minister took these points. He remained concerned about the costs. He concluded that he wanted to keep open the option of Package 3. But we must not commit to it at this stage.

The meeting agreed that there must be no leaks and no public announcements (for instance any notices to Reserves) until after the first UN Resolution had passed and after a further discussion with the Prime Minister.

I am copying this to Simon McDonald (FCO), Mark Bowman (HMT), and Ian Fletcher and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

MATTHEW RYCROFT

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