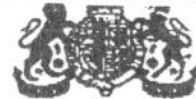


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British Embassy
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From the Ambassador
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Sir David Manning KCMG
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Prime Minister

*cf Jonathan
Matthew
Anna*

Dear David,

IRAQ

*his line signs that Bush is
impatient to move. Little
hesitation on the political aspect.*

1. I saw Armitage in private on 24 July. I should be grateful if the following could be very close-held:

2. I said that you would be in town next Tuesday, with Iraq high on your agenda. They could rest assured that if and when the US decided to move against Saddam Hussein, the UK would be with them. This would not be easy for the Prime Minister politically. But, as he had said at College Station, doing nothing about Saddam was no longer an option. You would want to explore American thinking and ask some questions. Thereafter, I expected that the Prime Minister would want to communicate with the President.

3. Armitage interrupted me to ask whether I had heard Henry Kissinger on Iraq at the Bohemian Grove last weekend. I said that I had; and gave Armitage the gist, of which he took careful note. Kissinger had emphasised (bear with me, this is to the point) the need for preemption in the post-9/11 world, a new era in international relations. If this were to lead to military action against Iraq, three conditions had to be met: that military operations in Iraq were brought to a rapid and successful conclusion - a prolonged war would be very dangerous to the US; that the US "got the diplomacy right" (no explanation by Kissinger of what he meant by this); and that the US arrived in Baghdad with a clear plan for whom and what should replace Saddam. It would be disastrous for the US to begin debating a successor regime after deposing Saddam.

4. I went on to say that Kissinger's views were not a million miles from our own. Nor from Powell's, said Armitage. I said that the UK believed it very important to

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*Christopher & I discussed this
even before he saw Armitage.
I shall pick up with Condi
next week.*
24 July 2002

1500

Now file per 287

David 25/7

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be able to build a public case for attacking Saddam: exhausting UN processes on inspections and unwinding violence between the Israelis and Palestinians were part of this strategy.

5.

He had been present because of Powell's imminent departure for Asia. Powell had made the argument for building international support, both in its own right and because it would help the Prime Minister politically. But, as Kevin Tebbitt picked up last week, and as Armitage candidly admitted, the "buts" in our "yes, but..." approach have less traction in Washington than a couple of months ago. It seems a given now across the Administration that efforts to get UNMOVIC into Iraq have run their course

; and that, with Israel/Palestine, the process engendered by the President's 24 June statement, in particular Quartet activity, is enough to keep the lid on during an Iraqi campaign. Among regional powers, the US needed only the active cooperation of Turkey, Kuwait and Jordan for military action.

6. On the campaign itself, Armitage said the following.

The President would receive Franks' military plans on 5 August. Bush wanted to get a move on. "Cheney would attack tomorrow". If happy with the plans, Bush would probably press the button, ie visible preparations, in the autumn or early winter. This would mean an attack on Iraq in January.

7. I said that this left very little time, eg to be clear who would replace Saddam. Armitage,

State would be setting up a unit to work this issue hard. There were signs of demoralisation at the heart of the Iraqi establishment. The US might publish a list of those regime members who had to go. Armitage agreed that US/coalition forces would have to stay for years. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, had said no less than two.

8. Finally, Armitage referred to the southern oil-fields. The US hoped to seize these quickly. They would have to decide what to do with the revenues. But swift capture would help to keep down the price of oil.

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COMMENT

9. There were other points we could have discussed, but the Sri Lankan Prime Minister turned up. On the basis of the above, you will arrive in a Washington where the Iraqi pulse is beating faster, but on key issues there is still an absence of policy and details.

Yours ever,

Christopher.

Christopher Meyer

cc: Simon McDonald, PS/Secretary of State
Sir Michael Jay KCMG

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