

William Patey, MED

Iraq

The Foreign Secretary was grateful for your submission of 15 March, the various papers prepared for the Prime Minister's meeting with President Bush, and Mark Matthews' submission of 13 March and John Williams' of 11 March on media strategy. The Foreign Secretary also held an office meeting on this on 18 March, from which the following action points arose:

- the JIC paper for publication should be solely about Iraq. The Foreign Secretary has discussed this with Alastair Campbell, who agreed. The Foreign Secretary suggests the paper resemble Michael Williams' paper for the PLP, with the meat of the JIC material inserted, so that it covers the range of concerns about Iraq but also draws explicitly on intelligence material. He is content, thereafter, for a more general paper on WMD, including other countries programmes, to be issued;
- he would appreciate detailed advice from Legal Advisers on the provisions in international law for the use of the kind of force that might be required should the Americans set themselves the objective of regime change. He agreed that Michael Wood should visit the US to discuss this with William Taft (his opposite number in the State Department);
- the Foreign Secretary would appreciate further details of Iraq's request to the Secretary-General for "clarification" of UNSCR 1284;
- the Foreign Secretary will minute the Prime Minister to flag up the main issues for Crawford, including a media strategy beforehand. Grateful for a draft, submitted via the PUS;
- the Foreign Secretary is willing to brief to the Diplomatic Correspondents and the Muslim media on Iraq, perhaps launching the JIC paper. Overall, we should continue to highlight the WMD threat, increase the profile of the UN angle and play down the prospects for military action. He also agreed that News Department/CIC should be reinforced with some Iraqi expertise.



18 March 2002

(Mark Sedwill)

cc: see over

cc: PS
PS/Mr Bradshaw
PS/PUS
Michael Wood
Peter Ricketts
Stephen Wright
Alan Goulty
William Ehrman
Heads: UND
NPD
News Dept
PRDD
~~John Grainger, Legal Advisers~~
Special Advisers