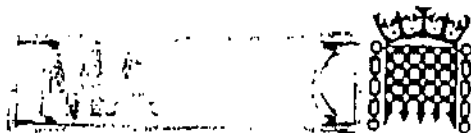


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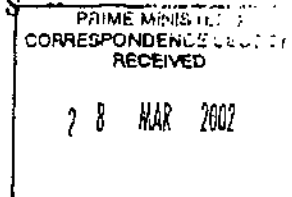
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The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy, M.P.
Ross, Skye & Inverness West



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing St
London
SW1

71-714

26 March 2002-03-26

Dear Tony,

Further to our conversation last week, I am writing in advance of your meeting with President Bush to express the concern that many feel with regard to the possibility of military action against Iraq.

It has become trite to preface reservations about a new military campaign against Iraq with expressions of condemnation of the regime of Saddam Hussein. But be in no doubt - those of us who believe that the case for fresh military action remains unproven are in no way apologists for a brutal dictator who subjects his own people to ignominy and deprivation, flouts international law, and continues to pose a threat to international security.

Military action should never be undertaken without clear and realistic political objectives that are capable of achievement, and always as a last resort once all other available means of achieving those objectives have been explored. I urge you to seek such avenues with the same vigour and determination which you showed in helping to build the international coalition against terrorism in the aftermath of the events of September 11th 2001.

It is axiomatic that those of us who seek to make Iraq fulfil its obligations under international law, should ensure that any action taken to impose these obligations is supported by international law.

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As has already been acknowledged by your Government, there is no evidence to link Baghdad with the events of 11 September. Nor is there any published evidence of the chemical, biological or nuclear capability of Iraq since the withdrawal of the UNSCOM weapons inspectors in 1998, but it would be reasonable to conclude from past history that there is a strong probability that such capabilities exist or at least are being actively pursued.

The return of weapons inspectors to Iraq must remain the international community's priority. I would therefore urge engagement with the Iraqi regime to solicit agreement on access for UNMOVIC on robust terms that enable inspection teams to achieve the verification of Iraqi compliance with UN Resolutions to their satisfaction.

Before the UK lends its support for action against Iraq, the Government must be satisfied that there is no other course of action open to the international community. I would also urge the Government should to seek the views of the elected representatives of the British People in debate and a substantive motion before the House of Commons before any further British forces be deployed beyond present military commitments against Iraq.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Charles'.

The Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP