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From: Jonathan Powell
Date: 28 March 2002

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Alastair Campbell
David Manning
Sally Morgan

CRAWFORD

Your meeting with Bush is an unusually important one and as timely on substance as it is untimely in terms of domestic politics.

On substance I think we have two basic aims:

- a) to agree sensible plans for Iraq and for the MEPP. On the former I would not major on UN authorisation or legal base or any of that. I would stick to how we come up with a military and political plan that is likely to be successful; how we get the necessary support; and how we set it up properly, with Afghanistan as the model – we need to make the case against Saddam and then set an ultimatum (in this case return of inspectors rather than handing over UBL). On the MEPP, the US are now engaged but . They will get nowhere if they focus only on the security track and ignore the political track. They have to bring the two together. You need to put an idea to him on how to cut through. Michael is working on a note for you.
- b) to capitalise on your standing in the US and your support for the Administration. I have put in a separate note on what you should ask for. You will also need to discuss missile defence and its timing. I doubt we can get anything much on steel.

In terms of positioning we will have to wrestle with three important audiences – the PLP, US and Europe – all of whom want to hear different things. I think however it is possible to square the circle by:

- Putting Iraq into the internationalist context. Refer back to Chicago (attached). What we are trying to do is a part with what we have done in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.
- Make the case against Iraq on grounds of the way it treats its own people as well as the WMD threat.

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- Set an ultimatum before we act rather than acting precipitately: we will only act if Iraq defies UN resolutions by refusing to accept the inspectors back in (and it does need to be anyone, anytime, anywhere).
- Demonstrate we do not have double standards by showing we are persuading the Americans to engage seriously on the MEPP.

You have opportunities to position this before, during and after. Before you go you are doing an interview with Katie Couric and you are making calls to Putin, Aznar, Schroder, Jospin and Chirac (but not Berlusconi). In briefing this we need to make it clear that you will be speaking as part of Europe as well as the UK when you see Bush. You are a bridge not a poodle! You have the press conference with Bush. As at Camp David we should be able to get a trade off. Then it was between warm words from them on European Defence in return for warm words from us on missile defence. This time we need warm words from him on MEPP in return for warm words from you on Iraq. Then you have your speech in which you can put Iraq into the wider context. And finally you have what you say in interviews and statements when you return to Europe.



JONATHAN POWELL

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