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From: David Manning

Date: 3 January 2003

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PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell  
Alastair Campbell  
Sally Morgan  
Stephen Wall  
Matthew Rycroft

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Non file for  
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IRAQ

There have been no major developments while you have been away. But we need to focus hard on inspections, and military planning in the next few days.

### Inspections

My sense is that the Americans are close to giving up hope that UNMOVIC can deliver results. We should urge them to stick with it. UNMOVIC only reached full strength at Christmas;

The inspectors need targeted support; and time to build up operating skills. Even so, it's true that the chances of them finding a smoking gun are relatively small which is why we need a defector if we can get one. But this, too, needs time.

### Military Planning

The Americans are in a hurry; perhaps too much of one. This colours their approach to UNMOVIC and makes them impatient. But it may also be affecting their approach to military planning. The Turks now seem almost certain to deny transit to US forces. A couple of months ago the American planners claimed this would be essential to a successful campaign. Now they are saying Turkey is optional and that they can do the job in the North with airborne forces. They are also arguing they can capture the oil fields quickly and leave Baghdad to fall in slower time. There are big political and military assumptions (and objections) here. Too much looks like hurried improvisation, half thought out strategy, with fingers crossed that Saddam will collapse in short order when the Marines go in.

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My conclusion is that Bush is in danger of being driven by the tempo of his own military build up, his insistence that everything should be ready by 15 February for final decision, and by an understandable preference to fight in the spring not the summer. He needs to give himself more time to build the case against Saddam and improve the odds for a second Resolution; and take a long hard look at the current state of the military planning.

I shall be in Oman on Monday and Tuesday for the Sultan's annual meeting. But I would welcome the chance to discuss all this with you and Jonathan on Wednesday.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David".

DAVID MANNING

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