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PM/03/008

PRIME MINISTER

*Good question, But I don't think
they affect your decision in principle*

agreed

for pm 10/17

17/

Iraq: UK Land Contribution

1. I have seen Geoff Hoon's letter to you of 16 January. There are three major issues in what he proposes which I would like to flag up. I also comment on the approaches he proposes to countries in the region to secure host nation agreement and support.
2. The first issue is targetting. I note that US plans envisage using five times as many air weapons against targets in and around Baghdad in the first four days of the campaign as we used in the whole of the 1990-91 campaign. This clearly raises questions about legality and proportionality. I note that MoD have been asked to let you see a list of targets which UK air forces might be asked to attack. But we should also remember that UK agreement will be required for targets of any US missions flown from Diego Garcia. So we need to know what use of Diego Garcia does the US envisage in the air campaign?
3. Second, I think we need more information on how the US envisage responding to any Iraqi use of WMD.
4. Third, much greater clarity is required about US thinking and plans for the aftermath. How long would UK forces be expected to stay in the area of responsibility proposed for

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them? What would be their role in what form of administration, not least in Basra, which the US plan envisages being surrounded but not taken in the first instance? We need in particular far greater clarity on US thinking on management of the oilfields. As you know, we have sizeable differences of view from many in the US Administration who envisage Iraq being a US military governate for an extended period of time. A UK team will be discussing this issue with the US next week. It will be putting hard questions, and highlighting our own view that there needs to be a move to UN administration, with coalition forces remaining responsible for security, as soon as possible.

5. Geoff also proposes a number of actions to seek host nation agreement and support for the stationing of our forces in the region. I am broadly content with the proposals. We will be liaising with MoD on the question of an approach to Turkey, and how this should best be choreographed with CDS's visit to Ankara next week. We also need to take great care on presentational issues in Jordan.

(JACK STRAW)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
17 January 2003

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