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S94/03

From: Matthew Rycroft

Date: 26 February 2003

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell  
David Manning

**POLITICAL AND MILITARY QUESTIONS ON IRAQ**

You asked the following questions arising from the Adelphi paper:

- (1) What is our military's assessment of the likely consequences of an attack on Iraq; ie how many casualties; how quickly the collapse?
- (2) Why do we not think the SRG will dig in, inside Baghdad and fight a guerrilla campaign?
- (3) What is the prospect of a pre-emptive BW or CW attack on our troops in Kuwait and are we certain we are adequately prepared and our troops protected?
- (4) Why will the 2,000 key individuals and the 26,000 SRG personnel mentioned in Ochmanek and Dodge's essays on Iraq not fight to the death, given the hatred of them by ordinary Iraqis?
- (5) How do we prevent the Shias rising up to take over from the Sunnis?
- (6) What is our plan for the successor Government in Iraq? Is it a military ruler? Or a military ruler first then a path to more democratic rule mapped out?
- (7) What is the UN role in the new Government?
- (8) What are the precise humanitarian issues we need to address and what is our plan for them?

I attach answers from MOD, FCO and DfID.

  
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DFID input to Prime Minister's questions of 20 February

What are the precise humanitarian issues we need to address and what is our plan for them?

The extent of the humanitarian crisis during and after any conflict will depend on the nature of the conflict. A key priority is thus to minimise the risks to civilians, to key infrastructure and to oil production (the revenues of which finance the Oil For Food programme on which 60% of Iraqis depend). There is more scope to **refine the coalition military options and minimise these risks**. If this is not done, the consequences – ten million plus people in need of food, millions of refugees, collapsed water and sanitation systems leading to cholera and other epidemics – are potentially too great for the international humanitarian system to plan for on current resources.

An acute concern is the impact on civilians of chemical and biological weapons, especially given the intelligence assessment that CBW use is most likely in the South. UN agencies and NGOs will not be present if CBW are used, and are not trained to respond. The **military will need adequate plans, including medical staff, to respond to the civilian impact of CBW use** (which Saddam may manipulate for propaganda gain), and provide basic medical and other humanitarian assistance before the UN/NGOs arrive.

**UN/NGOs will be constrained in their role by the extent of UN cover.** There are limits to what they can do under American leadership without compromising their independence. After last weekend's planning meetings in Washington DC, there are **severe doubts about the adequacy of US humanitarian preparations**, particularly for the risks set out above. DFID is planning to work primarily through UN agencies, unless extra financial resources are available, in which case a more active bilateral role in any UK-controlled zone could be considered.

DFID  
24 February 2003

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