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Extracts from FCO Diptel 73 of 101727Z, April 2002

Paragraphs 2-5 and 7 onwards have been redacted on the grounds that they reported on issues other than Iraq.

SUBJECT: THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH, 5-7 APRIL

INTRODUCTION

1. The Prime Minister and Mrs Blair visited the Bush ranch in Crawford, Texas on 5-7 April. Much of the discussion was tete-a-tete between the Prime Minister and the President. In FCO telno 215 to Abidjan, the PUS commended the Prime Minister's subsequent speech on 7 April at the George Bush Senior Presidential Library and invited you to draw on it.

IRAQ

6. The Prime Minister came away convinced that President Bush would act in a calm, measured and sensible but firm way. There was no question of precipitate action. But they agreed that Iraq's WMD programmes were a major threat to the international community, particularly when coupled with Saddam's proven track record on using these weapons. Letting that programme continue unhindered was not an option. The Prime Minister and President Bush agreed that action in the UN was the priority. It was essential to get the weapons inspectors deployed to begin to assess the extent of the Iraqi WMD programmes. The Prime Minister had been tough in his demands that Saddam must let the inspectors back in: "any one, any time, any place that the international community demands".

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