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14 April 2002

Dear Peter,

We spoke about your letter of 28 March on the comments I made during my recent Jonathan Dimbleby interview on the legal position on possible military action against Iraq.

As the transcript makes clear, I emphasised that it was too early to give specific answers about the range of options that we will need to consider. I said that we would be entitled, in principle, to act in self-defence if it were shown that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction which were capable of posing a threat to the UK. My subsequent statements about the need to go back to the UN for a specific resolution need to be seen against that background.

I do not think that my statements curtail your ability to offer an opinion on the legal position in due course. As you say, we will need to satisfy ourselves that this threat exists should we want to justify any action on the basis of self-defence.

I hope that this clarifies the position. I am copying this letter to Jack Straw.

Yours sincerely
Geoff
GEOFFREY HOON

The Rt Hon The Lord Goldsmith QC
Attorney General

*I am sure that we
can discuss this*

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Further



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