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cc Claire Smith

IRAQ: QUESTIONS FOR THE JIC

1. Welcome back. No doubt you will be thinking, as I have been, about JIC work on Iraq during January. I discussed this with David Manning today. We agreed that there would be a need to retest our standing judgements on:

- the continuing cohesion or otherwise of Saddam's regime
- the developing attitudes of neighbouring/regional states
- the attitudes of the Kurds and other internal opposition forces

We also agreed that in mid-January (say, second or third week) we should attempt to answer the question "what will Saddam do now or next?". The answer to this might allow us to retest the standing judgements.

2. David commented that our most pressing questions on Iraq were not that amenable to formal JIC assessment. In particular, what can we expect from UNMOVIC and within what timescale? Are we going to need a second Resolution and what are the prospects of getting it?

3. Separately, we agreed that there would be a wider audience (outside the MOD) for the current assessment of the significance of Iraqi military dispositions. What can we now conclude about Iraq's potential defensive strategy? What "offensive" options (eg against the Kurds) do they now have and how quickly might they be able to move? I am not sure whether this is best taken forward under a JIC remit or as part of a co-ordinated note from Assessments Staff or by DIS themselves. Their 23 December paper "the road to Baghdad" is relevant in this respect and rather good albeit much too long for what I have in mind. Between us we should discuss with CDI or DCDI.

4. Happy to discuss all this further.


JOHN SCARLETT

3 January 2003

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