



Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

JEREMY HEYWOOD *JH*

IRAQ

We have discussed the meeting and briefing arrangements for handling military action in Iraq.

"War Cabinet"

2. Arrangements are being made for the Prime Minister to chair a small Ad Hoc Group of Ministers (Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary plus other Ministers as required) together with CDS and one or two senior officials each morning at 8.30am to oversee the UK's involvement in military action in Iraq. I have asked the OD Secretariat to produce a short note recording the main decisions after each meeting, which will be sent only to those who attend.

3. There might also be a case for having weekly meetings of DOP (including the Chancellor and Home Secretary in addition), perhaps convening just before Cabinet. This would provide an opportunity for wider Ministerial involvement, including on day after issues. I suggest that this is something that David Manning keeps under review.

COBR

4. COBR is being activated today, and will be manned on a 24 hour basis. As during the Afghanistan conflict, David Manning will chair official-level meetings (both in restricted and wider formats) to co-ordinate and galvanise Departmental activity and to ensure that the Prime Minister is properly briefed on developments.

Intelligence and Situation Reporting

5. John Scarlett will brief the Prime Minister's Group on the intelligence picture. Additionally, his staff are now producing daily written intelligence updates, which will normally issue at 08:00. Commencing tomorrow, COBR will also produce early-morning sitreps and a more detailed thematic Evening Round-Up, following the Afghanistan model,

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6. I am copying this to Alastair Campbell, Jonathan Powell and David Manning.

AT

ANDREW TURNBULL

18 March 2003

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