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From: Michael Jay

Date: 24 April 2003

cc: PS/Mr O'Brien
PS/Baroness Symons
PS/Baroness Amos
Peter Ricketts
Peter Collecott
Simon Gass
Alan Charlton
William Ehrman
Edward Oakden
Graham Fry
Edward Chaplin
Dominick Chilcott, IPU
Charles Gray, MED

Secretary of State

IRAQ: FUTURE HANDLING

1. Since mid-January, the Office's mechanisms for handling Iraq have been based on MED's Iraq section (now semi-dormant while the staff have been redeployed on shift duty in the Emergency Unit); and the Iraq Planning Unit, which is, strictly speaking, an interdepartmental Whitehall-wide rather than FCO body. This has worked well. But it is not sustainable indefinitely, and we need to devise a stable structure which will enable us to sustain the considerable effort which will now be needed for quite a while yet.

2. Peter Ricketts, Edward Chaplin and I have concluded that we should amalgamate IPU and the former MED Iraq section into a new unit. We should continue to build on the cross-Whitehall brand recognition IPU has acquired, though to reflect the change of role should rename it "Iraq Policy (rather than "Planning") Unit". We should also work to maintain the present IPU's

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Whitehall-wide character, notably by recruiting a high proportion of staff on secondment from OGDs.

3. This will be a high priority for the Office over the next months at least. We shall find the necessary resources, though this will have to be at the expense of lower priority work elsewhere.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael Jay".

Michael Jay

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