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PM/03/014

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives

1. I have seen the latest set of draft military campaign objectives prepared by officials (Desmond Bowen's minute of 29 January to Sir David Manning).
2. I still have some serious concerns about how we present our military campaign objectives. I am assuming that these will be published if and when we announce our participation in military action. It is particularly important to explain carefully any reference to regime change. We must underline that this is only necessary because Iraq has consistently refused to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions. Otherwise people both here and in the region will assume that we had been intent on regime change all along.
3. I attach my preferred redraft of paras 3 and 4 of the objectives paper. This puts the removal of the Iraqi regime as the last of the 5 tasks listed in para 4 and gives it the right context.
4. I am copying this minute to Geoff Hoon, Sir Andrew Turnbull and Desmond Bowen.

(JACK STRAW)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

10 February 2003

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3. The obstacle to Iraq's compliance with UNSCRs is the current regime, supported by the Iraqi security forces under its control. The British Government has concluded that military action is necessary to enforce Iraqi compliance with UNSCRs. The UK is contributing maritime, land and air forces as part of a US-led coalition.

4. The UK's overall objective for the military campaign is to create the conditions in which Iraq disarms in accordance with its obligations under UNSCRs and creates the circumstances in which Iraq remains disarmed in the long-term. Tasks which flow from this objective are set out below. In aiming to achieve this objective as swiftly as possible, every effort will be made to minimise civilian casualties, damage to essential economic infrastructure and adverse humanitarian consequences. The main tasks of the coalition are to:

- (a) overcome the resistance of Iraqi security forces;
- (b) deny the Iraqi regime the use of weapons of mass destruction now and in the future;
- (c) identify and secure the sites where weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are located;
- (d) secure essential economic infrastructure, including for utilities and transport, from sabotage and wilful destruction by Iraqis;
- (e) remove the Iraqi regime, given its clear and unyielding refusal to comply with the UN Security Council's demands, and assist in the establishment of a new government which will permit the coalition to fulfil its objectives."

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