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From:

Date: 24 April 2002

cc:

PS/PUS

PS/Mr Bradshaw

Mr Ricketts

Mr Ehrman

Mr Fry

Mr Paver, News Dept

IMU

Mr Poston, CIC

NPD

PRDD

Mr Gray *seen and discussed in draft of*
Mr Chaplin
~~PS~~

*Dr. B. I. have added the thought, which I think is important, of giving
selected governments a further briefing on the WMD threat (last para of draft)*

IRAQ: ADOPTION OF THE GOODS REVIEW LIST AND MEDIA HANDLING

(Q2) 4

ISSUE

1. How should we handle publicity surrounding the adoption of the Goods Review List, and the release of the Iraq dossier?

TIMING

2. Immediate. The Goods Review List (GRL) / Oil For Food (OFF) Security Council Resolution may be agreed as early as Tuesday 30 April.

PREFERRED OPTIONS

3. I recommend that the Private Secretary should write to No 10 along the lines of the self explanatory attached draft proposing a number of briefing exercises at the time of the

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adoption of the UNSCR, and arguing that we should issue the WMD dossier at a later stage, when the necessary co-ordination , notably with the Americans, has been completed.

ARGUMENT

4. News Department, NPD, PRDD and IMU agree.

MED

28/iv.

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PS
No 10

IRAQ: ADOPTION OF THE GOODS REVIEW LIST ~~1 MEDIA HANDLING~~

I understand that Alistair Campbell's meeting on 23 April agreed on the need to ensure that the launch of the Iraq dossier did not convey a misleading ~~public~~ ^{misleading} impression ~~that military action was imminent~~; and ~~took the view that in order to achieve this and to make the dossier less WMD focussed~~, new material should be added to cover the record of inspections and the humanitarian and GRL aspects of our relations with Iraq. The meeting also discussed the possibility of timing the release to coincide with the passage of the UNSCR and GRL / OFF.

Developments since then affect the feasibility of some of this. We are now aiming to get the resolution passed by 30 April (before the next meeting between the Iraqis and the UN Secretary General). It is not feasible to finalise the dossier on this timescale, still less to co-ordinate properly with the US.

~~We would prefer to treat~~
In any case we see advantage in treating the GRL story separately, making the most of the humanitarian benefits of the new regime. The WMD dossier raises more controversial issues and speculation about military action, which would eclipse the humanitarian message of the GRL / OFF resolution. We are also concerned about the regional impact of an early announcement for obvious reasons - the Arab world is particularly unreceptive at present to critical messages about Iraq. (A)

We therefore propose the following approach

- News Dept and Edward Chaplin should brief the British Diplomatic Correspondents before the adoption of the GRL resolution.
- On the adoption of the GRL resolution (possibly 30 April)

- IMU should brief the Arab Correspondents, including through individual interviews;
- News Department and IMU should advise on additional interviews by the Foreign Secretary and Mr Bradshaw;
- we should issue a short note explaining the importance of the new controls;
- the Foreign Secretary should seek to make a statement to the House, or failing that to inform them by means of an inspired PQ (given that in any case we might expect a PNO).

~~We need to coordinate the release of the~~
We can decide in slower time when to release the WMD dossier in co-ordination with the US, and in light of the UNSG's meeting with the Iraqis next week, and the state of

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The book but ~~it~~ might be to coincide with
a renewed effort to get weapons inspectors reading that the
opinion in the Arab world. We would also at that stage brief selected governments,
notably in the Arab world, if possible, in greater detail than is possible in a public
document.

He will
addition in
on the books.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Defence Secretary and to Tom
McKane, Alistair Campbell and John Scarlett.

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