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NA - to issue at present

Pls file.



From: David Manning
Date: 20 March 2002

S 69/02

PRIME MINSITER

cc: Jonathan Powell
Alastair Campbell
Matthew Rycroft
John Scarlett

IRAQ

I attach a paper prepared by John Scarlett and the Assessment Staff on Iraqi WMD Programmes (it will be declassified on release). It gives details of Sadaam's nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programmes. It is drawn from intelligence, providing as much detail as we can safely reveal. The Americans are content for us to publish it in this form.

Alastair, Jonathan, John Scarlett and I have discussed handling. We think that we should issue the paper soon. One way of doing it would be for Jack Straw to give a speech, or make a statement to the House, next Monday. He would set out Sadaam's appalling track record since seizing power. He would remind people of his brutal regime, his use of WMD against Iraqi citizens, and his terrorising of the Marsh Arabs and the Kurds.

The speech or statement would also rehearse the invasion of Kuwait, and the treatment meted out to Kuwaitis during the Iraqi occupation. It would describe a regime that terrorises its own people and is determined to acquire WMD to terrorise its neighbours.. This would be the cue for placing our Iraqi paper in the Library of the House, and for subsequent briefing of the media.

We discussed whether we should delay until after you have been to Crawford. On balance we concluded that it would serve our purposes better to release the material now to avoid charges that this was an exercise that we had undertaken at Bush's prompting.

Are you content for us to go ahead on this basis?

Am'd.

*P.S. We discussed with Jack on
in the House this afternoon
He is happy to go with the
prefers a speech rather
than a statement.*

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