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Filed between 30 Nov & 3 Dec 200
Chief of Staff to PM

IRAQ: CHANGE OF HEART OR CHANGE OF REGIME

Objectives:

Removal of Saddam and replacement by a new, more moderate regime. Ending of WMD programmes and destruction of stocks. Ending of support for terrorism. Peace with neighbours.

Plan:

Diplomatic pressure followed by military campaign (without large-scale coalition ground forces). Insertion of inspectors by itself not sufficient to stop the campaign. Campaign only to end with the replacement of Saddam.

First step to use the power of example of US success in Afghanistan to increase pressure on Saddam. Already signs that he is worried - message to Powell, Foreign Minister in Jordan. May be prepared to accept return of inspectors if he thinks prospect of attack are serious. Need to ensure messages are reaching him, through Jordanians etc, that attack possible. After fall of Kandahar and capture of UBL, US makes it clear that Iraq is next (in parallel with action in other countries, eg).

Second, set up the demand. US, UK and others to the UN to demand return of inspectors. If this does not happen will take action on Iraq. Important not to be specific about what the action will consist of and not to set a deadline. Need to keep Saddam guessing. If asked, say regime change would be desirable, but not our formal objective for the moment.

Third, put in place military plan. If he fails to meet the demands, grounds to go ahead with the military plan. [reference to a possible coup]

. Supported by air power and small numbers of Special Forces in support roles. Need to be clear with everyone that this time we are going all the way or they will not rise up. If he does allow in the inspectors need to find a new demand to justify military action.

Conditions:

But none of this will work unless we can isolate Saddam further in the international community.

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December.

. PM to speak to Putin at Chequers on 21

Then unveil Russian support for return of inspectors in the UNSCR in January.

[reference to a covert campaign]

Third, France and Egypt. Will not be easy to win them over, but using personal relationships with Chirac and Mubarak may be able to win them round.

Finally try to win over rest of Middle East and Europe. Not essential, but preferable.

Absolutely essential that in parallel making progress on MEPP or will be accused - correctly - of double standards.

Public Lines:

Iraq a threat because of WMD capabilities and support of terrorist groups (do not try to link it to Al Quaida - war is on all international terrorism not just AQ and there is no convincing proof of AQ involvement with Iraq).

Demand return of inspectors so can verify dismantling of WMD facilities. Seek UN resolution.

If no return of inspectors will consider what further action. Not ruling anything in or out. Change of regime obviously desirable but not our immediate aim.

[Once rising happens] Our duty to support rising of Iraqi people against Saddam, Cannot allow him to use terrorism against his own people once again. Just like Bosnia or Kosovo international community cannot stand by and watch genocide.

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