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**CABINET OFFICE**

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone

Julian Miller

Chief of Assessments Staff

27/4/03  
Copy to:  
PS MINISTER: AF  
PS MINISTER: DP  
PS USofS  
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Sec(Iraq)-AD Aftermath  
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Special Advisers

Ja.143

Simon McDonald  
PS/Foreign Secretary

*Dear Simon,*

**IRAQ AND WMD**

1. I attach lines to take we have prepared here, following some discussion with NPD. I understand you may find it helpful to have them this afternoon.
2. Copies go to Matthew Rycroft (No 10), Peter Watkins, Martin Howard and Bryan Wells (MOD), William Ehrman and Tim Dowse (FCO) and to Desmond Bowen and John Scarlett (Cabinet Office).

*Julian*  
*Julian*  
**JULIAN MILLER**

**24 April 2003**

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## IRAQI WMD: WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE?

- Coalition forces are now actively pursuing sites, documentation and individuals connected with Iraq's WMD programmes. Both the UK and the US have deployed specialist personnel and will send more in the near future.
- This investigation will not be a quick process. Saddam has had ample time to conceal his WMD programmes. And he had considerable experience in concealment dating back to the early 1990s.
- The process itself will be painstaking and detailed: we want to establish the truth beyond any doubt. We cannot expect the coalition to conduct a proper forensic investigation in a matter of weeks.
- Give the emphasis on concealment, it is hardly surprising that concrete evidence of WMD has yet to come to light. Much equipment will have been dispersed and dismantled - we pointed to the first evidence of this policy in our assessment last September. Other judgements in the assessment have already been borne out, including by UNMOVIC. Examples include:
  - illegal programme to extend the range of the al Samoud missile;
  - illegal programme to produce even longer range missiles (UNMOVIC required Iraq to destroy casting chambers for longer range missile engines and noted the excessive size of their engine test stand);
  - concealment of documents at homes of personnel associated with WMD programmes;
  - suspicious programmes to manufacture long-range UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)
- We cannot know for sure what we will find. The testimony of scientists and documentation about WMD development and production programmes will be the key to determining the fate of prohibited equipment, material and munitions. But we cannot expect witnesses to come forward until they are confident they can speak safely.
- (SIS/FCO to provide line on Niger)

### Why did Iraq not use its WMD?

- We may never have a definitive answer. However it is likely that Saddam expected Coalition progress to be slow, and hoped to bring diplomatic pressure to bear once an advance became bogged down. By the time the true speed of the Coalition operations became clear, it may have been too late to reconstitute and deploy WMD assets. (It is worth recalling that the inspectors left on 18 March, the campaign began on 20 March)

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**Claim that Iraq could deploy CBW within 45 minutes?**

- This reflected specific and reliable reporting available last September. It clearly pre-dates the extensive programme of concealment and dispersal of Iraqi WMD.

**Media reports that Iraq destroyed its WMD just before the war?**

- Aware of New York Times story, based on information from an Iraqi scientist who has recently come forward. The scientist's information is being investigated.

**Media reports that Iraqi WMD has been transferred to Syria?**

- Aware of several such reports, but none so far has been substantiated.

**Role for UN inspectors?**

- We appreciate the need for credible, independent validation of any discoveries by the coalition. UNMOVIC and the IAEA would be an option to provide such validation.
- As Dr Blix himself has said, the circumstances are not right for the inspectors to return to Iraq at present. If and when they do, their tasks would have changed: the focus would be on monitoring and verification rather than detection. That would call for different skills – some restructuring of their operation would be needed. We have been in touch with UNMOVIC and IAEA about this.

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