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DAVID MANNING

IRAQ/WMD: JIC CO-ORDINATION

1. The current public debate about WMD in Iraq raises a series of basic questions about intelligence, its collection, assessment and role in policy making and public presentation. It therefore touches upon the vital interests of the intelligence community. The management of our community response, indeed the response of the Government, to these questions will be complicated and likely to remain a requirement for some time. We need to consider whether we have the right structures in place to co-ordinate this to the best effect.
2. Following discussion with you and David Omand, I propose to establish a Working Group which will act as a Sub-Committee of the JIC. I will act as Chairman with Julian Miller as the Deputy. In present circumstances we will need to meet regularly with a brief to cover the following areas, at least:
 - Exploitation in Iraq and elsewhere: to monitor the progress of site investigations, interviews and document exploitation and other relevant activities: to monitor also the reporting of these activities back to London.
 - Arrangements for assessing the results from exploitation.
 - Public policy issues, to include Parliamentary aspects as well as support for the Government response to the ISC Inquiry.
 - Public presentation, to include proactive and reactive responses to media coverage.
 - Co-ordination with US Agencies and authorities.
3. The Group need not be large. In particular, there is no need to involve representatives from all members of the JIC. But we will wish to have representatives from the FCO, MOD Policy, DIS, SIS, GCHQ and OD Secretariat. I would be happy to see Security Service involvement as well and will take their advice. Membership should be at a senior level. In some cases this will mean a JIC member. DCDI has already kindly agreed to attend. Julian will provide an (active) Secretary for the Group from Assessments Staff. Otherwise we have limited resources within our Secretariat and we will be looking to colleagues for help where necessary.

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4. The new Group will operate at the strategic, co-ordination level. It will be important to avoid overlap with other groups, in particular the Executive Group led by DCDI which oversees British interests in the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) and related issues. Indeed, I hope that this JIC Group will add value to and assist what DCDI is achieving.

5. My office will be in touch to arrange the first meeting, if possible tomorrow afternoon or Wednesday morning. We can discuss and agree the full remit then.

6. I am copying this note to other JIC members, to Jonathan Powell, Alastair Campbell and Clare Sumner.


JOHN SCARLETT

3 June 2003

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