

2
DECLASSIFIED

From: Matthew Rycroft
Date: 20 September 2002

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell
Sally Morgan
Alastair Campbell
David Manning
Robert Hill
Clare Sumner
Catherine Rimmer

IRAQ: TUESDAY'S DEBATE

As preparation for Tuesday, here are some background papers:

- FCO briefing for the debate.
- Q and A from Clare on parliamentary points.
- The dossier.
- Press office Q and A on the dossier.
- IDS's pamphlet on "A race against time: Europe's growing vulnerability to missile attack" from earlier this year.
- Text of Iraqi letter.
- Fact sheets on Iraq.
- Early draft of Jack's statement for the debate.
- FCO advice on tackling the double standards argument on Iraq/Israel.
- Catherine's folder of quotes and transcripts.

DECLASSIFIED

I suggest the following framework for your statement:

(a) Introduction

Thank the Speaker for recalling parliament. You have placed a copy of the dossier in the library. Describe the JIC and the preparation of the dossier.

(b) The threat

Summarise the dossier: main focus on WMD, but also material on the nature of Saddam's regime. History of the inspectors and UNSCRs, which flow from the cessation of hostilities agreement at the end of the Gulf War.

(c) The response

Bush's speech confirmed his intention to go down the UN route. This issue is now a challenge for the whole international community. UN credibility is at stake. Right that UN should deal with it. Importance of a new UNSCR. Impact on UN/multilateral approaches to global threats if the UN does not meet this challenge.

Summarise draft resolution: restatement of existing demands, need for tough inspection regime, demand for compliance. No decisions on whether it should set a deadline or threaten consequences in the event of non-compliance [to be updated next week – we may have circulated a draft Resolution by then].

DECLASSIFIED

- 3 -

Iraqi disarmament is key. Inspectors are a means to that end. They can only do their job if they are free to operate without let or hindrance. No restrictions; no special sites; no prevarication by Saddam; no negotiation with Saddam.

Iraqi letter does not change that. Iraq must comply with all demands. That includes unconditional access. Saddam has a long history of claiming to offer unconditional access, but then attaching conditions. He is at it again. Beware his ploys.

For instance, the Iraqi Foreign Minister told the UN last week that Iraq is "clear of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons". That is a lie. The dossier explains why.

Military action. Hope issue can be resolved without military action. No PM commits UK forces lightly. Hope I don't have to do so in this case. But Saddam must know that if necessary I will. No decisions have been taken. Hope Saddam complies with all obligations, making military action unnecessary. Precautionary planning is underway. Not going to go into any detail. If there is military action, can assure the House that it will be designed to bring compliance with the necessary UNSCRs – and will take account of the need to minimise civilian casualties. UK at forefront of efforts to improve humanitarian situation in Iraq.

(d) Tackle head-on some of the difficult questions to pre-empt questions:

- Why now? Dossier sets out the threat. It is increasing every year, especially with Saddam's illicit money. Would be unconscionable to be aware of the threat and do nothing.

DECLASSIFIED

- Why Saddam? Need to tackle WMD threat around world. Have different strategies for N Korea, Libya etc. With those countries there are at least some openings, some way of dealing diplomatically with them. Not possible with Saddam's Iraq. Only Saddam has (a) record of WMD use, (b) violated so many UN obligations.
- Link to Middle East. Tackle head-on the double standards charge: we are pushing for full implementation of all UNSCRs including those on Arab/Israel. Progress on the Middle East is vital, in its own right. Comment on recent violence. But there is a big difference between Iraq and Israel. There are unique, specific, unambiguous and numerous UN demands on Iraq; whereas the Resolutions on Arab/Israel impose requirements on both sides.
- Our quarrel with Saddam is absolutely not a war against Islam. Anyone who doubts this need only look at our record in Afghanistan and Kosovo – taking action to defend oppressed Muslims.
- Link to Afghanistan. Vitally important to continue to make progress. Proud of what has been achieved, but more, much more, to do. But not a choice between tackling Afghanistan and tackling Iraq – need to do both.
- Regime change? The country, region and world would be better off without Saddam, but the issue is his WMD. He must disarm – either by allowing the inspectors in or by being forced. We have no quarrel with the Iraqi people. They deserve better than a murderous dictator. This is a nation that should be rich and successful, not held in thrall by Saddam's tyranny.

- Iraq would be better off without Saddam, but only if the regime is replaced by one that is more representative of the country, and more likely to bring stability and prosperity. So importance of vision of post-Saddam Iraq. Territorial integrity assured – rights of Kurds and others must be respected, but no plan to break up Iraq. Prospect of improving the lot of the Iraqi people, and of the wider region.
- Iraq and terrorism? Condemn Saddam's links with terrorists, eg paying suicide bombers. No known link between Saddam and Al Qaeda. Terrorism is not the issue – WMD is.

(e) Consultation with Parliament.

This Government will continue to ensure that Parliament is consulted and kept informed in the normal way. Our track record on the events in Afghanistan speaks for itself. You made 4 statements, the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence were constantly updating the House and there were 5 debates.

(f) Conclusion.

Your role consulting Bush, Europeans, and others. Bush as calm, sensible. But be under no illusions: we are determined to deal with the threat from Saddam. This is a challenge for the UN and the whole international community. It must

DECLASSIFIED

- 6 -

rise to the challenge to deliver. If not, there will have to be other ways of dealing with the threat.

I am around over the weekend if you want any of this worked up into a full draft statement.

MATTHEW RYCROFT

DECLASSIFIED