

DECLASSIFIED



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

S /35 /03

From the Private Secretary

13 March 2003

Dear Peter, To All

FIXED

IRAQ: MILITARY PLANNING

The Prime Minister met the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary and CDS on 13 March. This letter is extremely sensitive and must not be copied further.

CDS advised the Prime Minister that the full moon meant that a later start date for [] would certainly be preferable, but that the projected date was not a show-stopper. The US military shared the preference for a later date, but had been told to accept the earlier date. There was a discussion about the timing of the end of the UN process, Bush's two public statements, the UK parliamentary vote, and the start of military action. The Prime Minister will pursue all these timing issues with Bush.

The Prime Minister again underlined the importance of []. The Defence Secretary and CDS briefed on latest contacts with the Turks.

David Manning will reply formally to your letter of 11 March to confirm the Prime Minister's approval of the military plan.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary decided not to change the travel advice to Kuwait at this stage.

CDS assured the Prime Minister that the Armed Forces faced no serious equipment problems.

I am copying this letter to David Prout (ODPM), Simon McDonald (FCO) and John Scarlett (Cabinet Office).

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*Long,
Matthew*

MATTHEW RYCROFT

Peter Watkins
MOD