

DECLASSIFIED



Cabinet Office

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Secretary of the Cabinet

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Margaret Aldred
Secretary to the Iraq Inquiry
35 Great Smith Street
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22 May 2014

Dear Margaret,

UK/US RECORDS – DECLASSIFICATION REQUEST

I am writing with the Government's response to the Inquiry's request to declassify and publish material from the Notes sent by Tony Blair to President Bush and from the written records of discussions between Tony Blair or Gordon Brown and the US President.

This has not been an easy decision, and I have had to balance the strongly held views of the Foreign Office on the potential damage to UK/US relations and the need to maintain the confidentiality of the Prime Minister/President channel of communication, which is of significant national interest, against the clear public interest in the Inquiry's being able to demonstrate that it has reached evidence-based conclusions.

Having now considered carefully the right balance to strike, taking into account the wholly exceptional nature of the Inquiry, I am prepared to agree to disclosure of this material subject to the following caveats: that the gists are restricted to the UK side and do not reflect or enable the reader to infer any US views; and that direct quotes (again restricted to the UK side only) are kept to the absolute minimum necessary to enable the Inquiry to reach and articulate clearly its conclusions.

My team are already in active discussion with yours on the detail of your requests. We will process these and the other outstanding declassification requests as quickly as possible. This will allow the Inquiry to give reasonable notice to those individuals who are subject to provisional criticism that the Maxwellisation process will soon be commencing.

I have asked my team to do everything possible to aid you in bringing the Inquiry to its conclusion as quickly as possible.



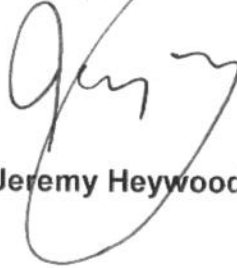
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As you will be aware, while accepting that it is entirely for the Inquiry to decide how to proceed, the Prime Minister is strongly of the view that all efforts should be made to conclude your vital work by the end of 2014.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Heywood', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Jeremy Heywood



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