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PS/Secretary of State  
NA/CNS  
MA/VCDS  
MA/CJO

PSO/CDS  
MA1/CGS  
PS/CDI

PS/PUS  
PSO/CAS  
MA/DCDS(C)

**RECORD OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHIEFS OF STAFF TO DISCUSS OP TELIC: 15 JAN 03**

Reference: MO 6/17/15K dated 16 Jan 03, Iraq: Military Planning.

1. I attach a record of the Prime Minister's Meeting with COS for your Principal's attention. It complements the reference. CDS has instructed that this note is not to be copied further.

why has he produced this?

Signed on CHOTS

SECCOS

RECORD OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND  
CHIEFS OF STAFF TO DISCUSS OP TELIC: 15 JAN 03

Following an overview of current UK Armed Forces commitments world-wide, CDS and DCJO(OPS) briefed the Prime Minister on the state of US/UK military planning; US force levels and planned UK contribution; key assumptions and constraints; and how the effects-based campaign plan aimed to deliver a 'winning concept'.

The Prime Minister asked for CDS's judgement on the plan and whether it would work. CDS stated that it would,

The Prime Minister was concerned about the number of bombs planned to be dropped on Baghdad and the risk of collateral damage and civilian casualties. He was assured that the accuracy of PGMs had improved since 1991 but that there would inevitably be civilian casualties, particularly if Saddam employed human shield tactics and the Coalition was unaware this had been done.

The Prime Minister asked what plans were in place should Saddam retreat to 'fortress' Baghdad.

and agreed that the best chance of success was for the effects-based campaign to break the 'fear factor' that Saddam used to hold power over his regime.

Both the Prime Minister and Secretary of State were concerned that destruction of Iraq's communications infrastructure could reduce the speed at which the population assimilated the hopelessness of resistance, and that hard-core elements could fight on autonomously. It was acknowledged that the 'jungle telegraph' would ensure bad news circulated but also that the Coalition would need to consider how news of the regime's collapse would flow quickly through the country.

The Prime Minister asked what the chances were of Saddam using his WMD. In response, the point was made that intelligence left no ambiguity over Saddam's willingness to use WMD if he judged the time was right, but that as his WMD were currently concealed from UNMOVIC it would take some time for it to be constituted ready for action. Sir David Manning asked whether Saddam could exploit the interregnum between the political decision for action and operations commencing to deploy his WMD. CDI replied that the Coalition's ability to detect Iraq's preparation of TBM was good, and such detection would likely trigger operations.

[Post Meeting Note: Sir David was advised by CDS after the meeting that the political decision did not, or course, have to be made public - and certainly not at A-16]

The Prime Minister asked what the worst outcome of action could be. Use of WMD and burning of the oilfields were discussed and it was agreed that planning was well advanced to counter both these contingencies. However, Aftermath planning was still quite immature and any rapid regime collapse followed by a power vacuum could result in internecine fighting between the Shia and Sunni populations, particularly in Baghdad, and adventuring by adjacent counties and ethnic groups that irretrievably fractured the country.

It was acknowledged that the intensity of the effects-based campaign raised difficult issues over political control of the targeting process and the Prime Minister asked for further discussion at a later date on this subject.

In summing up, the Prime Minister agreed that the quick shock, effects-based strategy was right, and asked for further work to be conducted on:

- The key messages given to the Iraqi leadership and people about Coalition objectives.

- A feasible plan for the Aftermath.
- Contingency plans be developed to counter potential 'unexpected consequences'.