

From: Alastair Campbell
Date: 9 September 2002

JOHN SCARLETT

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Jim Poston
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PS/Defence Secretary
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Martin Howard (MOD)
David Omand (CO)

At our discussion this morning, we agreed it would be helpful if I set out for colleagues the process by which the Iraq dossier will be produced.

The first point is that this must be, and be seen to be, the work of you and your team, and that its credibility depends fundamentally upon that.

The second is that you are working on a new dossier, according to the structure we agreed at the meeting last week, to meet the new circumstances which have developed over recent weeks and months. Therefore, the rush of comments on the old dossier are not necessary or totally relevant. People should wait for the new one, which will be more detailed and substantial.

The structure we agreed last week was roughly as follows:

- why the issue arose in the first place
- why the inspection process was necessary
- the history of concealment and deception
- the story of inspectors, leading to their departure
- the story of weapons unaccounted for, and what they could do
- a section on ballistic missile technology
- CW/BW
- nuclear
- the sanctions regime, and how the policy of containment has worked only up to a point
- illicit money
- the repressive nature of the regime
- why the history of the man and the regime (Iraq/Iran; chemical weapons on his own people; Kuwait; human

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rights) makes us worried he cannot be allowed further to develop these weapons.

Much of this is obviously historical, but the history is a vital part of the overall story. This is something the IISS Report deals with very well.

The media/political judgement will inevitably focus on "what's new?" and I was pleased to hear from you and your SIS colleagues that, contrary to media reports today, the intelligence community are taking such a helpful approach to this in going through all the material they have. It goes without saying that there should be nothing published that you and they are not 100% happy with.

It is of course inevitable that the media and political speculation surrounding the dossier will grow prior to publication. But it is important that nobody in government feeds it. Partial leaks, or running commentaries on an out of date document help nobody.

Our public line is that the dossier will set out the facts which make HMG judge Iraq/WMD to represent a real threat. It will be detailed and comprehensive. As to why we can't publish it now, it has to be cleared by all those who have helped to build the case. This involves important judgements, and we will take our time.

In the meantime, we should encourage the fullest possible coverage of the IISS Report, and other publicly available material. But we should not talk up the dossier. We should be making clear that even with the intelligence material, the picture can never be a complete one because the inspectors have been out for so long. We have to be disciplined in holding the line until publication.

We agreed that by the end of today, you should have most of the draft material together, with the Agencies providing the sections relevant to the middle part of our structure, and the FCO providing the more historical material.

You will want to go through this material before submitting a consolidated draft to No. 10 and others. You will also take this to the US on your visit at the end of the week.

In the meantime, I will chair a team that will go through the document from a presentational point of view, and make recommendations to you. This team, I suggest, will include John Williams (FCO) Paul Hamill (CIC) and Phil Bassett and David Bradshaw from here. Writing by committee does not work but we will make recommendations and suggestions, and you can decide what you want to incorporate. Once they are incorporated, we need to take a judgement as to whether a single person should be appointed to write the final version.

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It would be helpful to me and my colleagues if I could have something to look at by the time we get back from the TUC tomorrow.

We also discussed the importance of translating the dossier into other languages. Perhaps the FCO could look at the feasibility and timescale questions involved on this, but the Al Qaida evidence document benefited greatly in its impact through the various translations and their use diplomatically and on websites, etc.

We also need to consider whether to do a shorter version more aimed at the general public than the media.

So our current thinking and planning points to sometime in the middle of next week as the earliest possible time to do this. Once we have an advanced draft, we can address the questions of exact timing, launch details, Prime Ministerial and other ministerial involvement. The Prime Minister has expressed an interest in seeing an advanced draft.

I also briefed you on our discussions with US officials at Camp David, recorded separately. They intend to produce a series of dossiers, starting with one of Saddam's record of defiance of the UN, to be published alongside President Bush's speech on Thursday. They will then roll out several reports in the coming weeks. I am confident we can make yours one that complements rather than conflicts with them.

Dictated by ALASTAIR CAMPBELL and signed in his absence.
Director of Communications and Strategy

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