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PRIME MINISTER

SEPTEMBER 2002 IRAQ DOSSIER

1. I have decided to write to explain the process by which the document, published on 24 September 2002 as "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction - The Assessment of the British Government", was compiled. This letter has been seen by my colleagues on the JIC.

February-March 2002

2. In mid-February Overseas and Defence (OD) Secretariat commissioned a number of papers for your visit to President Bush after Easter. They included a paper for public consumption on WMD capabilities worldwide. In the event, the first draft, produced by Assessments Staff, covered Iraq, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] In mid-March it was decided to limit the paper to Iraq. A draft of this paper, prepared by Assessments Staff in co-ordination with the Agencies, was sent to David Manning on 21 March. It was decided that the moment was not right to proceed with the exercise and the paper was not released.

3. This March draft incorporated judgements made in the JIC Assessment on "The Status of Iraqi WMD Programmes" issued on 15 March.

April-August 2002

4. OD Secretariat monitored developments throughout April, May and June. In mid-June they sent various revised drafts to David Manning covering Iraq