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THE PRIME MINISTER

FAXED

- Via Secure White House
Link

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CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT

Dear George,

I've just seen the leaders of [redacted] Basically, they all support us and are strongly supportive of your statements and your leadership. All of them were enthusiastic about the way you had kept them on board. But they are under real pressure, more than I thought. Top flashpoints are: extending the war zone; and the MEPP. Here are my thoughts.

(1) Military

We are now well placed to move to the next stage of the military operation. We are reaching the limit on air strikes. We may be lucky on an air strike and hit Omar or UBL but we can't bank on it. We need boots on the ground and active, soon.

Otherwise, there is a risk that people will ask in the US/EU if we are really succeeding; the Taleban will take heart; the region will worry if it's on the winning side.

It is hard to see how we do this without removing the Taleban; and doing that will take pressure off "finding UBL". If they fall, we can clean him up later. But to take them out, we need Special Forces operations; and the Northern Alliance to make more gains.

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For this we need firm bases; either in Uzbekistan; and/or in Northern Alliance occupied Afghanistan.

We need visible force coming in, plus something for them to do soon. The Lily Pad is great in the meantime; but it's still too far away to give us what we need, so I'm told. If the Joint Chiefs can provide us with a clear plan of their ideal Special Forces scenario we can then deliver politically what they want militarily.

(2) Extending War Aims

There is a real willingness in the Middle East to get Saddam out but a total opposition to mixing this up with the current operation. [] all said: we know what you want; you can do it; but not whilst you are bombing Afghanistan. The uncertainty caused by Phase 2 seeming to extend to Iraq, Syria etc is really hurting them because it seems to confirm the UBL propaganda that this is West vs Arab. I have no doubt we need to deal with Saddam. But if we hit Iraq now, we would lose the Arab world, Russia, probably half the EU and my fear is the impact of all that on Pakistan. However, I am sure we can devise a strategy for Saddam deliverable at a later date. My suggestion is, in order to give ourselves space that we say: Phase 1 is the military action focused on Afghanistan because it's there that the perpetrators of 11 September hide. Phase 2 is the medium and longer term campaign against terrorism in all its forms. Of course we will discuss that and deliberate on it with allies and partners including in the Arab world. This kicks it away for the moment but leaves all options open. We just don't need it debated too freely in public until we know what exactly we want to do; and how we can do it. Incidentally, the leaders all warned about treating Syria like Iraq.

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(3) MEPP

This is the huge undercurrent in this situation. It is the context in the Arab world. The trouble is it's damn difficult, though your comments on a Palestinian state and

It will be very tough, but we need a big, new initiative. I wonder if we couldn't do as follows: pull out every stop to halt terrorist activity on the Palestinian side or at least have Arafat so clearly trying, that it's obvious to all; then use this break in the weather, to launch a new talks process, effectively accepting at the outset that the outcome will be 2 states living side by side.

involvement and it's your call but, for what it's worth, I have believed for 2 years now that the US just can't take the strain of this alone; and that contrary to Israeli worries, the into a reasonable deal.

After all, it is the

If we showed movement here, the Arab moderates would regain the upper hand quickly.

(4) Propaganda

The Arab world is just on a different media planet than us. And however controlled their media is viz their own governments, it comes at the Palestinian issue with a completely pre-set anti-Israel agenda; and it buys fairly heavily the West vs Islam story line (Berlusconi still reverberates). We need a dedicated, tightly knit propaganda unit for the war generally and for the Arab and Moslem world in particular: e.g. there is an €

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– she should be up there saying how Taleban-style regimes in the Arab world would return women to the Middle Ages. There are all sorts of propaganda hits we are taking in the Arab world which we don't need to; and gains we could make, that we're not making.

I hope this is helpful.

Lets talk soon.

Yours ever
Tom

The President of the United States of America

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