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THE PRIME MINISTER

20 January 2015

Dear Sir John,

Thank you for your letter of today.

As you know, I would have liked to have seen your report published already and certainly well before the forthcoming Election. The Iraq War, the lead up to it and its aftermath were hugely important events in this country's recent history. It is very important that your Inquiry sets out comprehensively for the British people what happened, and why, so that all the lessons can be learnt.

However, it is important that the Inquiry remains fully independent of Government and therefore the timetable and processes for completing your work are entirely for you to decide - not for the Government. So I have to respect your decision and fully accept that it will not now be possible for you to submit your final report to the Government and Parliament until after the Election. I hope very much that you will be able to do so shortly thereafter, and will continue to instruct the Civil Service to provide whatever assistance it can to support you in that aim.

Had the previous Government established this Inquiry when I first called for it, we would not be in this position today. But that cannot now be undone.

Yours,  
David

The Right Honourable Sir John Chilcot GCB