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**THE PRIME MINISTER**

**22 June 2009**

*Dear Sir John,*

**Thank you for your letter. I remain grateful that you have agreed to Chair the Independent Inquiry and welcome your interim response in your letter of 21 June.**

**I am grateful you agree with me on the process which has been established to consult with leaders of the main Opposition parties, and with the Chairs of the relevant Parliamentary Select Committees. I share the view that this will help the Inquiry decide how best to structure its procedures to fulfil the remit and meet the objectives we have set.**

**I believe the proposals we have discussed to ensure the families of those who gave their lives in Iraq, or who were seriously affected by the conflict, will be able to be involved at the earliest opportunity in the work of the Inquiry remain extremely important. Allowing them to express their views about the nature and procedures of the Inquiry, and being able to express these either in public or in private is essential.**

**As an independent Inquiry, as I said in the House of Commons last week, the methodology employed by the Inquiry is a matter for you. The Inquiry should decide on its structure, but I welcome the proposals for the process of the Inquiry as set out in your letter today. I believe your proposals will manage to meet both the need not to compromise national security but also enable the Independent Inquiry also to hold public sessions helping to build public confidence.**

**I share your view that the Inquiry will obviously need expert assessors and I am pleased you have already identified several who will be willing to serve in that capacity.**

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I am pleased that you intend to set out how these experts will be used and other matters explaining how you will go about the Inquiry in an open session.

I am grateful for your views that you will continue to examine whether witnesses can give evidence under oath or a similar formal undertaking.

Following further work and consultations by you, I look forward to hearing your final proposals as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Right Honourable Sir John Chilcot GCB