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SECRETARY OF STATE

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
ROOM 205, OLD WAR OFFICE BUILDING  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2EU



Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: v \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: g \_\_\_\_\_

MO 6/17/15C

14h April 2002

*Dear Peter,*

We spoke about your letter of 28 March on the comments I made during my recent Jonathan Dimpleby interview on the legal position on possible military action against Iraq.

As the transcript makes clear, I emphasised that it was too early to give specific answers about the range of options that we will need to consider. I said that we would be entitled, in principle, to act in self-defence if it were shown that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction which were capable of posing a threat to the UK. My subsequent statements about the need to go back to the UN for a specific resolution need to be seen against that background.

I do not think that my statements curtail your ability to offer an opinion on the legal position in due course. As you say, we will need to satisfy ourselves that this threat exists should we want to justify any action on the basis of self-defence.

I hope that this clarifies the position. I am copying this letter to Jack Straw.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Geoff*  
GEOFFREY HOON

The Rt Hon The Lord Goldsmith QC  
Attorney General

*I am sure that we  
can discuss this*

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