



**Declassified extract from a letter to the Prime Minister sent jointly by the Foreign Secretary & the Defence Secretary**

Date: 19 March 2003

**Iraq: UK military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq**

**Scale of medium term UK military effort**

7. It will be necessary to draw down our current commitment to nearer a third by no later than autumn in order to avoid long term damage to the Armed Forces. Keeping more forces in Iraq would be outside our current Defence Planning Assumptions. If Ministers wanted us to, we would need decisions now so that we would be able to recommend what would have to give elsewhere. Scaling down to nearer a third will limit our contribution thereafter to a maximum of around one brigade, a two star headquarters and possible a contribution to higher level command and control, air and maritime components and support enablers. Our view is that we should probably agree now to tell the US, for planning purposes, that this is the upper limit of our contribution.