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10 Downing Street
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20 January 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

IRAQ INQUIRY: PROGRESS

I last wrote to you in November 2013, and to Sir Jeremy Heywood in May 2014, with an update on progress of the Iraq Inquiry.

My colleagues and I have made very substantial progress since my last letter.

I can confirm that individuals are currently being given the opportunity to respond to provisional criticism of them in the Inquiry's draft report. That is an essential and confidential process. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on it in detail.

We intend to finish our work as soon as it is possible to do so whilst being fair to all those involved.

Until we have received and evaluated responses from all those who have been given the opportunity to respond, I cannot give an accurate estimate for how long it will then take to complete our work, but it is clear that will take some further months. I therefore see no realistic prospect of delivering our report to you before the General Election in May 2015.

Our report will be based on a thorough and comprehensive account of the relevant events from 2001-2009. We are determined to fulfil the responsibility placed on us to identify lessons to be learned from the UK's involvement in Iraq, including the way decisions were made and actions taken, over this long period.

In that context, I am pleased to record that since I last wrote the Inquiry has reached agreement with Sir Jeremy on the publication of 29 of Mr Blair's Notes to President Bush, subject to a very small number of essential redactions, alongside the Inquiry's final report.

Agreement has also been reached on the detail of what material the Inquiry will publish in relation to records of conversations between Mr Blair and President Bush, consistent with the principles agreed last year.

I should like to place a copy of this letter on the Inquiry's website on Wednesday 21 January.

Yours sincerely

Sir John Chilcot