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Dear Matthew,

You may be interested to know that ^{our} the Secretary of State for Defence has today announced the publication of the MOD paper "Defending Against the Threat from Biological and Chemical Weapons", a copy of which is enclosed.

The paper fulfils the undertaking given in the report on the Strategic Defence Review (paragraph 47 of Supporting Essay 5) to publish the outcome of our review of the defence response to the threat posed by biological and chemical weapons. In fact, as you will see, the paper goes well beyond the "summary of conclusions" then promised. It provides for the first time a clear and comprehensive account of the government's policy on biological and chemical defence. It shows how we are approaching the full range of issues, from arms control to protective equipment; and how the different elements of our response to the existence of these weapons fit together coherently.

In announcing the paper, the Defence Secretary has made clear that the Government remains firmly committed to the diplomatic and arms control initiatives we are pursuing in this area; these have already achieved significant advances. But, for as long as the threat exists, the UK will maintain the necessary military posture - including the ability to act to remove or reduce the threat - and the capabilities to protect our forces against the use of these weapons. Where necessary, the government remains absolutely prepared to use force to contain potential aggressors like Saddam Hussein.

I hope you will find the paper useful.

(Actually I doubt that you will find its contents very surprising but it is a major highlighting of HMG's profile over these matters)

Yours

Paul #

PS It was very good seeing, and delicious dining, with you in Washington.

I am also attaching to this standard letter covering the Glossy Paper, some other recent stuff I've done for (limited) public consumption which may interest you.