

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON 1st APRIL 2003**

In responding to questions posed to me last week by BBC Radio Jersey concerning a comment that had been made on the 'phone in' programme, that notwithstanding the resolution which the States had made on 18th February 2003, the States should further resolve to indicate their support for British troops now engaged in the war with Iraq. I advised that, while I fully supported the proposal the only way to get a clear States' view on this important matter would be for a Report and Proposition to be debated by the States Assembly; but, although I would be prepared to ask the Policy and Resources Committee to consider taking such a proposition to the States, given the present programme of States meetings, it was likely that this process would probably take too long to have any real effect.

I therefore undertook to compose a letter in which I declared my personal and wholehearted support for British and other coalition troops engaged in the war with Iraq and to make this letter available to other members today, in order that they might also sign it if they so wished. However, in discussing this proposal further with many colleagues and having taken advice from the Bailiff and the Attorney General, for which I am most grateful, I have been persuaded that such a letter would not be the best route by which such sentiments might be transmitted.

As it would not be the result of a formal States debate, such a letter could not, even if it were to be signed by all members, be considered a formal communication from the Insular authorities and could not, therefore, be properly transmitted through normal official channels. It would thus have to be transmitted outside of official channels and might not, and probably would not, receive due and proper consideration at the highest level.

A much better alternative is about to present itself to us, in that on the 8th and 9th April 2003, we will be visited by the Right Honourable the Lord Irvine of Lairg, The Lord Chancellor and Sir Hayden Phillips, KCB, Permanent Secretary in The Lord Chancellor's Department.

I have therefore asked the Bailiff, in his speech of welcome at the States' formal dinner which is to be held in honour of the Lord Chancellor on the evening of 8th April 2003, to ask the Lord Chancellor to convey to Her Majesty's Government our support for British and other coalition troops engaged in the war with Iraq.

I apologise to members who came here today expecting to be able to sign a letter, which I had undertaken to provide. However, I hope members will be persuaded, as I have been, that the opportunity to share our views directly with the Lord Chancellor is a much better option and will prove much more effective.

Whether members are in support of the war with Iraq or not, I am sure that we would all wish vigorously to express our support for our troops, who include a number of Jersey men and women, who are putting their lives at risk in fighting for their country, in a war not of their making.