

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTE OF THE ATTORNEY  
GENERAL TO THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, 7 MARCH  
2003**

**"Summary**

**26. To sum up, the language of resolution 1441 leaves the position unclear and the statements made on adoption of the resolution suggest that there were differences of view within the Council as to the legal effect of the resolution. Arguments can be made on both sides. A key question is whether there is in truth a need for an assessment of whether Iraq's conduct constitutes a failure to take the final opportunity or has constituted a failure fully to cooperate within the meaning of OP4 such that the basis of the ceasefire is destroyed. If an assessment is needed of that situation, it would be for the Council to make it. A narrow textual reading of the resolution suggests that sort of assessment is not needed, because the Council has predetermined the issue. Public statements, on the other hand, say otherwise.**

**27. In these circumstances, I remain of the opinion that the safest legal course would be to secure the adoption of a further resolution to authorise the use of force. [...] The key point is that it should establish that the Council has concluded that Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity offered by resolution 1441, as in the draft which has already been tabled.**

**28. Nevertheless, having regard to the information on the negotiating history which I have been given and to the arguments of the US Administration which I heard in Washington, I accept that a reasonable case can be made that resolution 1441 is capable in principle of reviving the authorisation in 678 without a further resolution.**