

# DECLASSIFIED

From: Jonathan Powell  
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## PRIME MINISTER

### IRAQ

There is a new fluidity on Iraq after months of stasis both as a result of changes on the ground and of the mid-term elections and the Baker report in the US. This gives us an opportunity both to change strategy on Iraq and to change the way Iraq is seen by western publics. We need to be more imaginative, eg in thinking about how we get the UN re-involved and how to make neighbours take responsibility. But we are in a bunker mentality – both politicians and civil servants – and we need to change our way of working to take advantage of the opportunity:

- The weekly meetings don't have quite the right cast-list. I have asked Nigel to think of different participants. I think we need a general as well as CDS. We should also have fortnightly videoconferences with our people out there and with the Americans.
- We need a different agenda to focus discussion. Nigel's plan, which will be ready at the end of next week, will provide that.
- We need to incorporate a media plan on Iraq focussed on changing people's attitudes here and in the US. David is getting one drawn up. I think we probably need to recruit someone good to work on this full time.
- You need to talk to Maliki in a more relaxed way and more often. In particular we need to convince him of the need to work for a power-sharing executive.

But there is also a bigger question that Liz raises. If this were a domestic problem we would use the whole team to strategise about it. Maybe you should try a discussion in that format to see if we could find a better way of communicating what we are trying to do. It may be that we think about Iraq in too technocratic and in an insufficiently political way.

*I agree. I should  
see Maliki in Dec.  
& maybe do weekly  
video calls or bi-weekly.  
we also need some good  
new balance V-2  
And the idea is to invite  
the Compact plan.*

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