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cc:

From:

Date: 17 January 2006

cc:

John Sawers

Dickie Stagg

Dominic Asquith

~~Iraq Directorate~~

Iraq Directorate

Andrew Noble

SMD

SMD

David Warren

CIG

Lindy Cameron, DfID

Home Office

JTAC

James Tansley, Basra

William Patey, Baghdad

we spoke. Many apologies
that this got stranded
here - Michael was
not sure it set out clearly
how the rules would be
applied and how the reviews
would be conducted.

As I understand it, the

12/1. arrangements are as
set out in para 4, with mainly
review/scrutiny here in London?
MJ 28/2

PS/PUS
APS/Dr Howells
Private Secretary

**IRAQ: PROPOSED CHANGES TO TRAVEL IN SOUTHERN IRAQ FOR HMG
CIVILIAN STAFF**

1. In his minute of 9 January (Flag A), the Foreign Secretary agreed to our recommendations for changes in the travel rules for HMG civilian staff in Southern Iraq on the proviso that these rules are subject to regular review.
2. In his minute of 3 January (Flag B), Dr Howells asked for details about how these reviews would be conducted and their frequency.

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3. We are very conscious that the recommendations proposed in our submission of 19 December (Flag C) are extraordinary, but necessary in order to counter an extraordinary level of threat to our staff in Baghdad and Basra. It is only the over-riding political requirement for this work to be undertaken which justifies continuing to operate in this threat context. We are fortunate in having excellent staff in Iraq in whom we have every confidence to operate these new travel rules responsibly. They are fully aware that the safety and security of our staff is paramount at all times.

4. The security situation in Basra and Southern Iraq will continue to be reviewed on a daily basis by the experienced Overseas Security Manager (OSM) in conjunction with the Post Security Committee (PSC) which is chaired by the Consul-General. Each and every road move will be reviewed and subjected to risk appreciation by the OSM and the Consul General or his Deputy (the latter is also the Post Security Officer, PSO) before they are authorised.

5. The OSM, who is best placed to assess all of the locally available intelligence and determine whether an individual journey may take place, will report daily to the PSO, weekly to the Chair of the PSC, and formally to the PSC on a monthly basis. The monthly reports will be submitted to the Heads of the Security Management and Iraq Directorates and to the Senior Overseas Security Adviser, where they will be scrutinised by both Directorates and by the SMD's "Nuts and Bolts" Committee (which oversees security arrangements in Iraq). Any significant developments will be reported to Ministers.

6. In accordance with the final sentence of paragraph 3 of Dr Howells minute, the Consul-General in Basra and the Ambassador in Baghdad have been asked to report any feedback on security procedures from the Foreign Affairs Committee during their forthcoming visit.

Iraq Directorate

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