

IRAQ: IMPLEMENTING THE CONCEPT "FROM SECURITY COALITION TO INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP".

1. Ministers discussed a FCO paper in December 2005 entitled "Moving From Security Coalition to International Partnership". That paper set out how to address the challenges facing the Coalition in 2006 by expanding from a primarily security based Coalition to a broader international effort, which effectively interweaves the three lines of operation: Security, Political and Economic. This paper considers how to do that and should be read in parallel with the IPU paper about how to expand the UN role in Iraq.

The context

2. 2006/7 is the period of transition in Iraq. Our strategic objective is to enable the Iraqi Government to assume more effective control over Iraqi territory and the security, political and economic agendas. While it does so, there will be a continuing need for a major international military presence in Iraq operating under UN mandate and therefore for us to encourage our current military partners to retain their presence. At the same time, as the Iraqis increasingly assume the lead, we should be developing a broader international partnership (Donors, the region and countries currently outside the Coalition), with the balance of effort increasingly borne by the broader international partnership.
3. This will require careful handling of tactics. The Iraqi Government will need wider support from the international community than can be provided by the current Coalition forces; however, the wider international community is unwilling to provide that support for as long as the Iraqi programme is perceived by them as dominated by the security agenda; and in order to keep existing military partners bound in, they need to be able to counter domestic pressures to withdraw by presenting their military contribution as having a "humanitarian" objective.

What are the influences that will bring other nations in?

4. Other contributors will be induced to make commitments to Iraq through a combination of:
 - Improved security. This remains the key inhibitor and is dependent upon factors not exclusively in the UK's gift. A political process which addresses inter-communal distrust, coupled with increased effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces and the visible transfer of responsibility to the Iraqi authorities would help.

- Increased UN presence. As the separate paper identifies, an increased UN role will be the key driver to bring in others.
- Change in rhetoric. This needs to reflect the points above and shift the focus on Iraq from security Coalition prism to that of a broader International Partnership. A "forward perspective" setting out the new Iraqi Government's priorities will be an early requirement.
- Better identification and presentation of needs by the Iraqi Government to the international community. The new Iraqi Government needs to take the lead in the advocacy of its own cause by approaching
 - (a) current Coalition partners to argue for their continued commitment while the ISF build up capacity
 - (b) (with the Donor community) the wider international community to explain the additional support it requires
- Regional actors. We should make greater use of the region's fear of Iranian influence to persuade them to engage with Iraq and turn it into an effective ally. For the same reason, we should be confronting the Iraqi Government with the current Iranian record to question whether the Iranian Government is the sort of friend Iraq really wants.

How do we do this and achieve more through this new partnership?

5. Progress will be slow. It will require a more subtle rhetoric that uses inclusive vocabulary and some theatre. Large-scale institutional reform such as the establishment of a Regional Contact Group is likely – for now – to consume greater effort than the outcomes justify given continued US wariness of Syria and Iran. Our first steps might therefore be to:
 - Maintain the current Coalition at or close to its present membership, seeking alternative missions for those who depart. We and the US lobby continually for new or sustained contributions to the Coalition. In early 2006, the UK will work to keep the Danes engaged (although they face a tricky troop mandate renewal in mid 2006); the Australians and Japanese through different missions in MND(SE); and discuss with the Italians how they might deploy other policing and/or criminal justice assets in Iraq.
 - Establish an in-country Ambassadorial led advisory group including the UN, UK, US and Iraq neighbours, though holding out the prospect of a P3 / P4 and Iraq grouping. This would seek to persuade the Iraqi Government to address issues of concern to ourselves, the region and the wider international community.

- Ensure that any Iraqi "Forward Perspective" highlights the need for international engagement and contains concrete proposals for that. We are working up thoughts for what an Iraqi Government should set out as its early priorities. This would be the opportunity to call for increased international engagement, including in areas where international partners might feel obliged to lend assistance (Rule of Law, Human Rights) as well as other key areas (such as Policing).
 - Press Donors to do more to deliver on their contributions. Some of those who have yet to deliver include: Canada: US\$ 133 million, Spain US\$ 177 million and Sweden US\$ 35 million. This will be a prominent theme of the next Donor Community Conference, scheduled to take place in Irbil in March.
 - Encourage wider international participation in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Original US plans to roll out PRTs across Iraq have stumbled through a lack of funding and personnel. But the intent is still to roll out a number of PRTs across Iraq. We should continue to press for wider international involvement (including the UN, World Bank and donor community). We are approaching PRTs in MND(SE) – UK-led in Basra and Italian-led in Dhi Qar – with a view to their becoming possible vehicles for just such involvement. The US will need to deliver a coherent and inclusive message on PRTs.
 - Making better use of upcoming international events to sell an Iraq "narrative". During the Spring within the EU, at NATO, with key donors and other multilateral institutions we need to push the argument for broader involvement in Iraq. Ministers should have an Iraq point for every meeting with their opposite numbers. We should be working for a Brussels II – type conference in the Summer.
 - Encouraging the Gulf Arabs to do more. We need to develop a steady and visible improvement in engagement between Iraq and those in the Arab world. The proposed Arab League National Dialogue Conference is a useful next event. Other elements could include: commitment by Arab non-Paris Club members to 80% debt relief; visits by Arab Ministers to Iraq; disbursement of promised aid commitments; investment in the wider region (MEPP, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan) along the lines being proposed by the US. The proposed US Strategic Investment plan may provide further opportunities for this.
6. The US agrees with us at official level. But Principals continue to remain nervous of opening up the debate to a wider group of countries than those in the current Security Coalition for fear of having to cede control over the agenda. Their rhetorical shift, therefore, has been minimal and remains focused on the domestic political agenda. Ministers will need to engage their opposite numbers.

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