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Robin Lamb, HM Consul General  
Maj Gen Cooper, GOC MND(SE)

23 May 2006

Dear Colleague

#### BASRA: THE WAY FORWARD

Whitehall Senior Officials met on 22 May to discuss how to draw together a strategic plan to deliver HMG's objectives in Basra. The Prime Minister wants us to look at the options to achieve a turnaround in the position in Basra.

I attach a note which outlines a strategic agenda for action in Basra, reflecting preliminary thinking in London. You will also have seen drafts of the FCO paper for DOP(I), which sets out the serious problems we face.

At Monday evening's meeting, it was agreed that, to ensure proposals for ministers reflect a co-ordinated approach by the key stakeholders and a robust assessment of how we deliver success against our objectives, it would be helpful to have co-ordinated advice from senior departmental and military representatives in Basra. I should, therefore, be grateful if you would provide advice which:

- looks innovatively and ambitiously at options to deliver our strategic objectives, including the potential resource implications; and
- clearly indicates the sequencing of different actions, on individual strands of activity, necessary to provide a critical path to success.

If there are areas where you have different views on how success can best be achieved, I should be grateful if those could be highlighted to allow a full debate on the options.

I should be grateful if your reply could be sent to recipients of this letter by 0800 London time on Wednesday 31 May (reflecting the bank holiday), to support a meeting of senior officials later that day. You should liaise with colleagues in Baghdad to ensure their views are reflected.

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I am sending a copy of this letter to those who attended the meeting, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, William Patey, Lt Gen Sir Rob Fry and Tim Foy.

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ours

**MARGARET ALDRED**

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## **GETTING BASRA BETTER: A STRATEGIC AGENDA FOR ACTION**

### **Policy objective**

Basra which:

- is on track to meeting the indicators for turning “green” by end 2006/early 2007;
- has mechanisms in place that are able to develop and deliver policies relating governance and security through institutions which are broadly acceptable to the population and with effective links to the Iraqi central authorities;
- enjoys an improving level of basic services;
- is attracting appropriate investment and other economic assistance both for its own economic and employment needs and to support the Iraqi government as a whole;
- has levels of corruption, criminality and criminal and sectarian violence below the point at which they would seriously undermine governance, security and economic development and popular support for Iraqi governmental institutions;
- Iranian influence is not malign.

### **Security**

This requires:

- continuing HMG engagement on SSR to ensure the Iraqi security forces are capable of :
  - o tackling criminality;
  - o bearing down on militias;
  - o purging malign elements in the ISF (both those that are corrupt and those which are aligned to political groupings);.
  - o working with the MNF-I on higher end military tasks relating to the insurgency, and gradually taking over these tasks.
- the Iraqi government to demonstrate that it has a grip on Basra through:
  - o serious and visible engagement from Baghdad;
  - o if necessary, an appropriate show of strength by the ISF, reflecting their growing capabilities;
  - o encouraging and co-operating in the process of security transition.

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- the active prosecution of targeted operations by both the Iraqis and HMG against corrupt and criminal elements in the ISF and those who attack coalition forces;
- sufficient, and responsive, security arrangements to facilitate HMG's (and other actors as appropriate) civil reconstruction, governance and economic development programmes to succeed;
- action by both HMG and Iraq to discourage and disrupt malign Iranian activity in either governance or the security situation.

### **Governance**

This requires:

- provincial government reform to strengthen its capacity to govern Basra, supported by HMG and other donors;
- engagement by the Baghdad government across the full range of Basra-related politics, including regionalism;
- timely provincial elections.

### **Economic development**

This requires:

- the Iraqi government to have a development strategy that reflects and supports Basra's role as a major source of national wealth and an economic gateway to the region and wider world;
- Iraqi government and the coalition encouragement of external investment (including through the IFIs), particularly in the oil and energy sectors. That will require credible assurances on the security position;
- appropriate and effective Iraqi structures and legislation at national and regional level to govern economic development;
- corruption contained by the Iraqis to a level which doesn't significantly undermine investor and international institutional confidence.

### **Delivering a better Basra**

- We need to identify policies for security, governance and economic development, including the operation of the PRT which, in concert with the US and Iraqi government at both the national and provincial level, can reasonably be expected to lead to strategic success.

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