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From: Prime Minister
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IRAQ

The situation is self-evidently serious. But two basic elements remain valid:

We are trying to help Iraq become what most Iraqis want it to be; and the FRE and extremists are trying to stop us, i.e. we are on the side of the future Iraq needs and our opponents represent the very type of politics the Middle East needs least.

Iraq has therefore become the battleground for the future of the region: does it go benign, showing Muslim and Arab nations can embrace the modern world; or descend into a mixture of religious fanaticism and brutality that only brutal dictators or even less than brutal dictators can manage?

The strategy being employed by the FRE/extremists is a conventional one: to create chaos in Iraq, therefore making progress impossible; to provoke retaliation to terrorism on the back of which retaliation they can garner support; and by a combination of the two persuade us to get out and/or the country to think the battle will be lost and therefore not defend the Iraq they want to see.

Meanwhile anyone else , will add to the trouble.

The UN remains hesitant for a mixture of reasons.

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The international community that didn't support the war and a large part of our own media want it all to fail so they can say: we told you so.

Our strategy is fine in one sense: Iraqiisation of security and support for the democratic political process. The problem is that the urgency of the situation may overwhelm us and make our timelines for Iraqiisation naïve.

The fact is Allawi needs help now; and there has to be a clear sense of our gripping the situation now. At present, he feels he doesn't have the equipment or Iraqi forces to restore order; he hasn't the support around him to do the job; and meanwhile he is buffeted by forces, even if reasonably good ones like Sistani over which he has precious little control. And the bread and butter issues – electricity etc – get lost in the security malaise.

So what to do?

- (1) Allawi needs first-class political, media and strategic capability put in now. We have to identify the best home-grown Iraqi talent to put in his operation; and then match them with our own people we have to hand-pick now. They have got to draw him up a proper strategic plan he can implement.
- (2) In other key departments, but notably defence, the DFID proposals and help, need to be examined to ensure real robustness and again, if necessary, our people put in.
- (3) Allawi has to be given, by hook or by crook, immediate strong, well-armed brigades who can move into any trouble-spot and clean up. This has got to take precedence over the general Petraeus plan. But we cannot have a row over equipment. If he needs the stuff, he has to have it.

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- (4) The above is subject to one thing. He has to have commanders in the field whose loyalty and that of their troops is clear. Again he needs a plan to do what is necessary to achieve it. But we cannot have a situation as in Basra where the police chief is working with Sadr's people.
- (5) The de-blocking of reconstruction money must happen - in the Sunni triangle and elsewhere this is key to winning hearts and minds.
- (6) We must make it clear we aren't going anywhere until the job is done, i.e. we aren't going to be defeated. Period.
- (7) There needs to be a big diplomatic push on the UN and troops from Muslim countries in the region. They don't want a chaotic Iraq any more than we do. We need to know which countries to press and for how many troops.
- (8) In Basra, we must get the advice of the military and our post on what is urgently required and do it, or get Allawi to do it. If that means Allawi appointing people, so be it.
- (9)

When I meet Allawi in September, it should be with a coherent plan to change the situation.

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