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Sir Andrew Turnbull KCB CVO  
Cabinet Secretary  
Cabinet Office  
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LONDON  
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14 January 2004

Dear Andrew,

**IRAQ – CIVILIAN STAFFING**

I thought that you, and Wednesday morning colleagues, would welcome an update on civilian staffing in Iraq.

I enclose a paper which covers the issues – including duty of care, managing the security risk and resources. If you or others have further questions or concerns, please get in touch. I would particularly welcome comments by next Monday, as I visit Iraq later in the week.

Yours ever,  
Michael

Michael Jay

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## IRAQ: CIVILIAN STAFFING

### Summary

1. FCO and DFID now have 165 civilian staff in Iraq, all volunteers. The figure will probably rise over 200 between now and the transition in July, peaking in June and falling thereafter. The numbers, and spread of activity, are greater than Ministers envisaged last summer. So are the security risks. We have to be prepared for casualties. But we are taking reasonable steps to manage the risks, and are fulfilling our duty of care. Baghdad and Basra have given thought to staff drawdown if security deteriorates. But, as things stand, current and projected deployment is sensible and manageable - resources allowing.

### Detail

2. Current position. Taking account of deployments and returns already scheduled for January, there are 165 civilian staff in Iraq under FCO and DFID auspices. This figure comprises 37 FCO staff, 23 consultants contracted by FCO, 5 DFID staff, 48 consultants contracted by DFID, and 52 staff seconded via FCO from OGDs/government agencies/police. 72 of the staff are in Baghdad: 9 in the British Office Baghdad, 8 in Iraq Rep, 4 in DFID's Baghdad office, and 50 in CPA Baghdad (including 7 in the UK-CPA Coordination Cell). 72 are in CPA South, 5 in the Basra governorate team, and 16 in other governorates. All these staff are volunteers.
3. The staff in CPA Baghdad are involved in a wide range of areas: policing and security sector reform; oil; governance; press and communications; finance; immigration and customs; infrastructure and infrastructure security; civil affairs (for which we provide the CPA Director); human rights; justice; media policy and regulation; gender, youth and sport; and civic education. The spread in Basra is even wider, given our overall responsibility in the South.
4. Additional deployments. The total will probably increase to over 200 with planned/likely additions over the next six months, eg:
  - around 15 further consultants recruited by DFID for CPA South through Crown Agents
  - around 15 further OGD staff/consultants for CPA South
  - 6 more police in Basra and the southern governorates
  - 5 political process consultants to CPA Baghdad and the governorates
  - FCO Arabists on short-term attachments to assist the political process
  - a new Department of Health team for CPA South and the southern governorates
  - additional Human Rights staff to train Iraqis in taking statements
  - additional office support staff for CPA Baghdad
  - return of Treasury and Bank of England staff once new accommodation is ready in Baghdad
  - FCO staff setting up a new Embassy in Baghdad and Consulate-General in Basra

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5. Post-transition. Staff numbers will probably peak in June with overlap of CPA secondees and staff for the new Embassy and Consulate General. Thereafter, numbers should fall off to 70 or 80 UK-based staff many of whom (including DFID technical experts) will be continuing to provide technical assistance now provided under CPA auspices. They will be spread between the Baghdad Embassy and Basra Consulate General, and possibly in other regional offices.
6. Duty of care. We would not normally deploy civilian staff to an area as dangerous as Iraq now is. But Treasury Solicitors have confirmed to the Cabinet Office that we are complying with our duty of care if (i) we take all reasonable measures to mitigate risk, at least on a par with other governments, (ii) staff are volunteers, and we put no pressure on them to take up posts in Iraq, and (iii) we deploy staff for good reason. We are confident we are fulfilling these requirements:
7. Mitigating the security risk. All civilian staff are required to attend security training courses before deployment. Once deployed, they are subject to joint FCO/DFID security guidelines. These are designed to ensure that we are fulfilling our duty of care. The CPA itself is responsible for CPA staff security. But our guidelines and additional security assets bring security for British staff up to the levels which we believe are required to allow staff to do their jobs while mitigating the risk to an acceptable level. Most importantly, all British civilian staff are required to travel in armoured vehicles and in convoy with armed protection teams in armoured vehicles. These arrangements have already saved British civilian lives on at least two occasions. We are likely to have to maintain similar security arrangements for British civilian staff well beyond June. We have to be prepared for the possibility of serious casualties: despite our efforts to mitigate risks, people may just be in the wrong place at the wrong time; and we can never be sure that determined attackers will not find a way through.
8. Only volunteers. All staff are volunteers. The security risks are made clear to them during security training before they go. Some volunteers have dropped out at this stage.
9. Deployment for good reason. We are confident that all staff now in Iraq are making an important contribution to HMG's objective of an Iraq which is no longer a threat to its neighbours, and whose people enjoy freedom, prosperity and representative government. We have nevertheless encouraged Baghdad and Basra to consider which jobs are absolutely essential, against the possibility of our having to draw down before July if the risk/benefit balance were to shift significantly against us.
10. Possible staff drawdown. Baghdad envisage that there would be three phases: transfer of some staff to the North and Basra, if those areas remain less risky (this would be appropriate for only around 10 staff); withdrawal of some staff (fewer than ten) whose work requires regular and frequent travel outside the "green zone" as an absolute necessity; and reduction to a core of about 30 staff focussed on the political process, operational policing (including training), central economic functions, vital infrastructure, press and communications, CPA regional operations, and essential management support for UK staff.

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11. Basra are reluctant to think in terms of partial staff drawdown, given CPA South's broad responsibility for administration in its area. In addition, unlike in Baghdad, drawdown of British staff in Basra would have to be part of a drawdown of all nationalities in CPA South, for whom we are responsible. But, if the security situation were to deteriorate seriously, Basra could envisage reduction to core consisting of the Regional Coordinator and his immediate staff, and the Heads of Finance, Public Affairs, Reconstruction, Law & Order and Utilities. This would enable a basic political function, and maintain at least liaison with Iraqi officials in key administrative areas.
12. Resources. The FCO has reprioritised its human and financial resources to help resource the British effort in Iraq; but they are now stretched to their limit. There is little room left in the FCO's £4.8 million budget for secondees costs. Without a further subvention from HM Treasury, we will be tightly constrained, particularly if we cannot find OGD staff (whose salaries are funded by home departments), rather than consultants (whose salaries we pay), for some of the envisaged non-DFID posts. Security costs are very high – some £28m so far this financial year. It is not yet clear how continuing security and other costs – before and after the political transition – will be met in 2004/5.

## Conclusion

13. Current and projected deployment over the next six months is sensible – and manageable as long as the necessary resources are available.

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