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MSU 4/5/2N

5 October 2007

Dear Gordon,

IRAQ

We have, as you know, been refining our planning for the UK military commitment to Iraq through to the end of 2008. This work has reflected our respective conversations with General Petraeus, Simon McDonald's discussion with Steve Hadley, your talks in Baghdad and Lieutenant General Houghton's subsequent meeting with Petraeus.

We have assumed that:

- PIC in Basra Province will take place in November-December 2007;
- the security situation in southern Iraq could nonetheless deteriorate; but
- large scale UK reintervention in Basra City will not be required;
- there is a continuing Iraqi requirement for training and mentoring – your discussions with Prime Minister Maliki appear to have confirmed their appetite;

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Prime Minister

- our continued military engagement will be part of a broader pro-Government commitment to southern Iraq.

We have also agreed with General Petraeus a revised list of tasks which we believe would be achievable within the force levels set out below.

Against that background, we have refined the package of options passed to the Cabinet Office on 28 September. They all started from the baseline strength of 5500 personnel in southern Iraq prior to our relocation from Basra Palace. Details, including numbers and roles, are inevitably provisional at this stage and will require definition with other Government Departments, the US and other Coalition partners. With that caveat, the MOD advice is that the option that best meets our overall objectives in Iraq is as follows:

- maintain Special Forces, our 200-strong contribution to Coalition headquarters in Baghdad, and Iraq-related maritime and air deployments in the region;
- support transition to PIC in Basra Province with a 2-star divisional and a 1-star brigade headquarters, plus four battlegroups, enablers and logistics, totalling around 5000 personnel. This force (TELIC 11) would deploy from November 2007 up to March 2008. We would keep under review the possibility of reducing further the size of this force in the light of conditions on the ground. We envisage that c.500 of these personnel would be rear-based at Camp Buehring in Kuwait to provide logistic and enabling support;
- from March 2008, start moving to a new mission in southern Iraq, the second phase of overwatch, with a primary focus on training and mentoring the Iraqi security forces and only a limited *in extremis* re-intervention capability. TELIC 12, deploying from May to November 2008, would comprise a headquarters, two battlegroups or equivalent, and appropriately reduced enablers and logistics. Our intention is to keep our footprint inside Iraq to the

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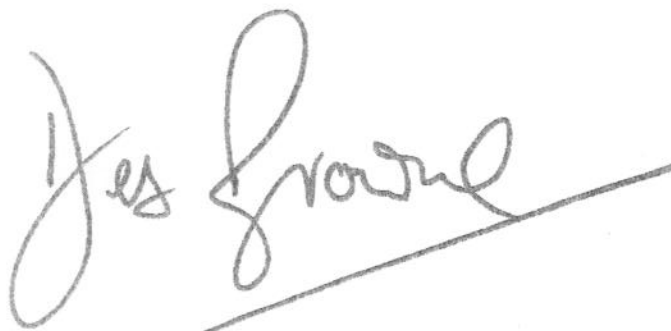
minimum commensurate with the military task and risks. Early indications suggest that around 2500 personnel based in southern Iraq should be achievable. Further work is underway to confirm these figures, and the requirement for enabling and logistic support in Kuwait.

At this stage, we assess that this deployment would not require significant US support in southern Iraq. Our very provisional estimate of costs from May 2008 is in the region of £650M per annum. We have not yet considered possible options beyond November 2008.

I emphasise that this analysis is work in progress but it deliberately builds in room for manoeuvre on numbers to give you a robust basis for your announcement next week. On Kuwait rear-basing, the FCO is still in the process of negotiating the memorandum of understanding and it is unlikely that this process will be formally concluded before your statement. If that is the case, I suggest that you refer publicly to basing the 500 logistic support troops 'elsewhere in the region'.

I should be grateful for confirmation that you are content for planning to continue on this basis.

I am copying this to Alistair Darling, David Milliband, Douglas Alexander, 'C', Sir Gus O'Donnell and Simon McDonald.



DES BROWNE

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