

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

CDS/3/3/7

5 Jul 07

PS/SofS

Copy to:

MA/Min(AF)	MA/DCDS(H)	DJC AD Mar
PS/Min(DES)	MA/DCDS(Pers)	SHAPE UKNMR
MA/USofS	MA/DCDS(EC)	DJC AD Land
PS/PUS	MA/UKMILREP	MA/DG Op Pol
EA/CNS	XO/DCOM JFC(B)	DSF
MA1/CGS	MA/SBMR(I)	DJC-Mar1
PSO/CAS	MA/ACDS(Ops)	PDRS-MNE AD
MA/VCDS	DGISP	PDRS-MNE1
MA/CDM	HBDS(US)	No 10 – Mr Simon McDonald
MA/CJO	DG DCDC	Cabinet Office – Margaret Aldred
PS/CDI	CDS LO Washington	FCO – Richard Codrington
PS/Policy Director	DJC-D Mil	PS/'C'
MA/DCDS(C)	DJC-D Pol	COSSEC ASEC (Cts)

CDS VISIT TO IRAQ 1-3 JUL 07

Headlines

- GOC MND(SE) focussed on 'engagement'.
- New Basrah Provincial Director of Police, General Jalil and Commander, Provincial Basrah Operations Centre, General Mohan in post.
- Reconciliation having positive effects with Sunni/AQ.
- US surge seeing marked effect around Baghdad with significant reductions in IED and attacks.
- Petraeus and Crocker circumspect on formal Basrah PIC.

GENERAL

1. CDS visited Iraq over 1-3 Jul 07. At Basrah Air Station (BAS) CDS was briefed by GOC MND (SE) (Maj Gen Jonathan Shaw), Mr Robert Tinline (Deputy Consul General), Brigadier James Bashall (Comd 1 Mech Brigade). He visited the FP Wing (C-RAM), the Basra Military Hospital and the manoeuvre Battle Group (2 Royal Welsh) and held discussions with General Mohan (Comd PBOC), Maj General Habib (CG 10 IA Div) and General Jalil (Basrah PDoP).

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

2. In Baghdad CDS was briefed by Lt General Lamb (SBMR-I), Brigadier Neil Baverstock (DDC SPA), Major General Paul Newton (DCS(E)), Brigadier Stephen Gledhill (DCG MNSTC-I), Brigadier Rob Weighill (DCG CPTT) and held discussions with General Petraeus (CG MNF-I), Ryan Crocker (US Ambassador) and Dominic Asquith (UK Ambassador). CDS also called on Abdul Qadir (Iraqi Defence Minister).

GOC MND(SE)

3. General Shaw's is now confident that the conditions set for PIC have been met. He is encouraged by the messages being articulated by Gen Mohan but recognises that he will be judged in the long term by his actions. CDS pointed out that whilst Baghdad (Qadir) is serious about Basrah and is pushing hard for an IA Division, extra troops are no substitute for the long term political solution. CDS asked whether our presence in the PJCC/BP remained of value. GOC explained that there is little military advantage to retaining a presence in either location with the exception of retaining a base for strike operations and some situational awareness. His advocacy was that we should look to relocate to the COB at the earliest practicable point. Gen Shaw assessed that the violence would probably peter out in the city and be re-directed exclusively at the COB once we had removed our forces from both Basrah Palace and the PJCC. CDS agreed and made it clear that the Iraqis would have to accept responsibility for Basra security if we relocated from the city centre, only in extremis should we look to re-enter the City and only in support of the IA.

Mr Robert Tinline (Deputy Consul General)

4. Tinline believes that we have done as much as we can in Basra although much depended on Mohan and Jalil. CDS asked about JAM's political strength in Basra. Tinline's view was that it remains very strong, particularly amongst the young. Tinline went on to suggest that Mohan wants UK forces out of Basra City but not full PIC. CDS explained that once MNF has relocated from the city the responsibility for security would inevitably pass to the Iraqi forces and that this would be 'de facto' PIC. Whilst Tinline agreed that without our presence violence may fall in the city and Iranian influence would start to weaken he warned that the US had a much bleaker view of Basrah and remained concerned over Iranian influence. On the new Basrah PDoP (General Jalil) both CDS and Tinline agreed that his key objective would be to remove the bad elements within the IPS but acknowledged that this would take time. Tinline then briefed that the PRT had made progress, notably on running budgets and in governance development. The key was to try and unlock business friendly initiatives, such as borrowing mechanisms and reinvigorating exports to Kuwait.

COMD 1 MECH BRIGADE (Brigadier James Bashall)

5. Bashall briefed on tactical situation and stressed the increasing challenges of re-supplying the city locations. He also highlighted the real risks associated with removing casualties from PJCC. Whilst he believed that the PJCC would be militarily viable post withdrawal from BP, notwithstanding the challenges of CASEVAC and sustainment, it would take over an hour for a QRF to deploy from COB if needed. Bashall then briefed that the future of the Maysaan BG was being considered and that

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED
2 of 6

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

details will be worked through with Corps. The BG may move to POEs around Shalamchah and Sheeb. In their current posture the BG is not achieving any meaningful effect.

COMMAND UPDATE

6. GOC pointed out the increasingly 'Hizbollah-like' activities of JAM against ISF - the kidnapping of an IA Brigadier being the latest of a series of anti-ISF acts. In discussion on PIC it was clear that we had followed the ISG recommendations and that we had reached a point where the Iraqis needed to take responsibility in the city, although it would need careful handling with the US. Supportive statements by Gen Mohan were helping. In order to build further capacity, the Iraqis are raising a 1000 man Basra Palace Protection Force by August. Led by a Sunni officer and answerable to Mohan, they will be ex IA, recruited from across Iraq although coordination with 10 IA Div would be crucial. CDS was concerned about the funding and training of the Iraqis ATCs for Basra International Airport (BIA); BIA represents a substantial HMG legacy in this regard. Comd 903 EAW and MEOT are seeking to resolve the issues and ensure that BIA becomes a fully ICAO accredited airport.

COMD 10 IA DIV and COMD PBOC

7. General Habib updated CDS on 10 IA Div's training progress and CDS noted that the operational experience the Division's battalions had accrued in Baghdad would hold them in good stead for the future. CDS was encouraged by his meeting with General Mohan who he believed to be working to a credible and coherent plan to engage JAM in Basrah. Mohan's plan was to split JAM in Basrah where he believed they formed three bespoke elements (Iranian proxies, criminally motivated JAM and mainstream JAM (who he believes are biddable)). Mohan explained that his assessment was that his ability to engage effectively in this would be prejudiced by an MNF presence in the city and the PJCC in particular. He believed that the MNF presence brought a spurious legitimacy to the cause of those fighting against MNF. General Mohan indicated that he wishes to relocate the PJCC to the SAAH and perhaps establish a command node in the COB. CDS voiced concern about the loyalty of both the army and police given the endemic militia infiltration. Mohan agreed and said that it would take time. Mohan was clear that he wanted UK forces out of the city and that this would be a positive signal to the mainstream Sadrist groups to start taking action against the more extreme factions (Iranian backed and criminal elements of JAM). CDS was keen that Mohan understood that once UK forces left the city, perhaps as early as August then security in the city would be his responsibility. Mohan would also need to make clear to Maliki that he wanted MNF out of the city and that this along with the issue of PIC should be raised at the next opportunity within the MNCS.

903 EAW FP WING (C-RAM)

8. Whilst still in development the C-RAM system effectiveness is rapidly improving. To date, 100% of all IDF have been engaged. Warning times have doubled and allow personnel time to find hard cover. The system is having a positive effect on morale

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

and the posture of personnel is increasingly tailored to our capabilities rather than enemy activity.

2 ROYAL WELSH

9. Lt Col James Swift (CO) briefed on the operational realities of conducting operations in Basrah. Since 1 Jun the BG has broken into the city 9 times and disrupted 14 IEDs and had 42 detonated against them (some set off by civilians just ahead of the patrols). The importance of EECM and BGTI were highlighted and it was reported that only 60% of the fighting Warriors have BGTI and only 44% are EECM fitted. CDS was impressed with the courage and professionalism of those he met within the BG.

Action: PJHQ to confirm the requirement for EECM and BGTI and report the capability shortfall if appropriate to CDS.

Provincial Director of Police (General Jalil)

10. In a meeting dominated by [REDACTED] CDS highlighted the significant challenge of cleansing the IPS in Basrah. Jalil said his authority was directly delegated from Maliki and that his first priority would be rooting out the bad elements within the police. CDS and Jalil agreed that re-instilling confidence and trust in the people would be crucial to reforming the police. Jalil claimed that JAM are only 300-600 strong in Basrah and that Motqada Al-Sadr has no control over them.

CG MNF(I) (General Petraeus) and US Ambassador (Ryan Crocker)

11. General Petraeus began by explaining how he saw the surge going. He was encouraged that there has been a decrease in the level of violence in Baghdad but acknowledged that this was not surprising given the quality of the US army and its heightened activity levels. The key debate will be what happens once this surge has culminated. Politically, both Petraeus, and significantly Crocker, acknowledged that the legislative milestones that were hoped for as a consequence of the US surge were proving elusive. Switching to Basrah, Petraeus clearly believed there remain significant problems associated with 'unstable politics' and 'JAM infiltration'. CDS replied that Basrah is all about money and power, rather than sectarianism and he explained that British Forces vacating the city centre (PJCC/BP) could undermine Iranian influence. General Mohan did at least have a [REDACTED] plan. Petraeus added that Mohan is a Nationalist at heart, which would help counter the malign Iranian influence. Crocker pointedly asked about Basrah PIC. CDS explained that the goal in Basrah should be to set the conditions for political progress, rather than simply suppressing violence. CDS believed that the delivery of PIC represented a catch 22 situation in which it was difficult to demonstrate the ability of the provincial authorities to assume responsibility for security without having handed over that responsibility. We therefore need to view the notion of PIC as a process rather than a single event in itself. We must stop thinking in terms of major milestones. Withdrawal from the PJCC and BP would make the Iraqis accept security

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET - UN EYES ONLY

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED

responsibility in Basrah and be a part of a process toward PIC. Whilst Crocker acknowledged he is wary of PIC being granted too early he espoused a need for a few 'wins' before formal PIC declaration. Petraeus agreed and used the analogy of an incremental upward spiral toward PIC. Basrah was following the course of the central ring; the challenge was to initiate an upward rather than downward spiral from this central position. These 'wins' might include successful withdrawal from Basra Palace and Mohan proving effective. On the September deadline Petraeus re-iterated that he and Crocker would be giving a totally objective view.

DDC SPA (Brigadier Neil Baverstock) – CAMPAIGN PLAN

12. Baverstock updated CDS on the current iteration of the Campaign Plan. A key question remains whether the LOOs will be sufficiently mature before MNF ramps down Force levels. The US ramp down has 2 options: begin in Feb '08 at a rate of one BCT monthly or commence in Apr at a quicker pace. The US exit strategy may now evolve via a bilateral security agreement with the GOI although the current Plan finishes in Jun '09.

HM AMBASSADOR (Dominic Asquith)

13. :

CDS asked what would happen in September if the GOI collapsed. HMA was clear that there were significant risks associated with a coalition withdrawal and these need to be carefully managed. However HMA thinks that such a collapse is unlikely - 'the forces for inaction are still there' and the political 'limbo' will continue.

On PIC, HMA advised that formal PIC could be harder to achieve after withdrawal from the city centre if conditions deteriorated.

IRAQI DEFENCE MINISTER (Abdul Qadir)

14. CDS had a formal meeting with Qadir :
CDS enquired whether General Mohan's appointment to Basrah could be extended beyond the current 3 months. Qadir agreed that it would not be a problem, confirming that Basrah remained a 'top priority'.

FORCE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT CELL

15. Major General Newton updated CDS on progress toward reconciliation.

his government may be ready to take some risks in outreach to militant groups and political opponents, they still have a visceral rejection of Baathification. They see more risk than opportunity. Newton outlined the need for a smarter engagement with GOI, primarily through the new Iraqi Reconciliation Action Committee (I-RAC). There is a need to create an environment in

SECRET - UK EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED
5 of 6

DECLASSIFIED

which Maliki can act with confidence ;

CDS cautioned that we should not raise expectations and added that it would be a mistake to concentrate on one group at the expense of the others.

< Original signed >

Cdr RN
MA/CDS
Ext 1
DII: CDS-MA

SECRET - UN EYES ONLY
DECLASSIFIED