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Telephone: ( )

*From the Secretary of State*

The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

7 April 2003

Dear Tony,

**POST CONFLICT IRAQ**

**Urgently need to agree with the US proper limits to ORHA's mandate and a process for inviting UN to lead on IIA preparations.**

As you know, I am concerned that we establish clear red lines for UK involvement in post-conflict Iraq, and set out to the US a way forward that will comply with the Attorney General's advice and win the international support necessary for successful reconstruction.

I see at least four bottom lines for the UK (there may be more – particularly on UNMOVIC return to verify WMD destruction):

i) ORHA's mandate must be limited to coalition forces' Geneva and Hague Convention obligations to provide humanitarian assistance, ensure public order and keep civil administration functioning. ORHA engagement in major reform would breach the Attorney's advice and alienate international opinion;

ii) the process leading to the appointment of the IIA must be facilitated by the UN, not ORHA or the coalition;

iii) the IFIs must be involved in the reconstruction effort. As UKDel Washington's letter of 6 April (attached) says, it is hard to imagine a successful reconstruction effort without their playing a leading role, and both Köhler and Wolfensohn have repeatedly made clear that they will not contemplate their involvement without the support of the international community - which in practice will require a UN SCR;

iv) revenues from Iraq's oil must remain under UN Security Council stewardship as they are now through Oil For Food. Any change will have to be agreed by the Security Council until the IIA is ready to take full responsibility. The coalition should not have a formal role.

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My assessment from talking to the IFIs.

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My assessment from talking to the IFIs, the UN, and Development Ministers from range of countries is that none of the serious players will be able to support the reconstruction of Iraq (or IFI involvement in it) without a clear UN mandate. This conclusion is likely to be reinforced at this weekend's IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings. The longer we delay being clear in public about the process we envisage to set the post-conflict arrangements in place, the more difficult it will be to get that backing – particularly if facts begin to be established on the ground in Iraq and senior US representatives continue to make the kind of comments they are currently making.

What we need to do is set out to the US a process which respects the current facts on the ground but will win sufficient international support to make the reconstruction effort successful, and make clear that it will be very difficult for us to support anything less. I attach some ideas of what such a process might look like.

The consequences of us continuing to be vague about the detail of future arrangements are very serious. We risk putting our armed forces and our civil servants in a situation where they are complicit with breaches of international law. We risk prolonging an insecure environment in Iraq by leaving Iraq as occupied territory and the coalition as an occupying power. We risk antagonising Arab opinion across the region and jeopardising the prospects for progress with MEPP. And we risk the UK's own international reputation.

The conclusion I draw is that we need some urgent clear red lines with the US focused on the need to limit ORHA's mandate and a process for inviting Kofi Annan to appoint a Special Coordinator with a mandate to coordinate humanitarian assistance and reconstruction planning, and to start preparations for an IIA conference.

I am copying this to Gordon Brown, Jack Straw, Geoff Hoon, Peter Goldsmith, Sir Andrew Turnbull, Sir Jeremy Greenstock (UKMis New York), and Tom Scholar (UKDel IMF/IBRD).

*Low S*  
*Clare*  
CLARE SHORT

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