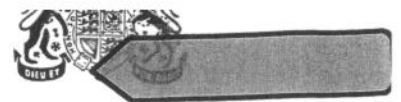


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For information



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

25 April 2003

London SW1A 2AH

*Dear Mr. ...*

Iraq: ORHA

Thank you for your letter of 17 April. We are grateful for the Prime Minister's strong support for the policy set out in the Foreign Secretary's minute of 15 April.

ORHA deployment

ORHA has now deployed from Kuwait into Iraq. Jay Garner has undertaken a wide ranging regional tour to assess the scale of the reconstruction task and take the political temperature on the ground. Major General Cross and members of the UK press-handling team have accompanied him. Other members of the 20-strong UK team previously with ORHA during the planning phase in Kuwait have arrived in Baghdad. I enclose a list of all UK military officers and civilian officials currently serving in ORHA. Working and living facilities are very basic, and they estimate that it will take a week or so for ORHA to establish its own systems and begin to engage with the Iraqi Ministries.

Identifying secondees

In the light of the situation in Baghdad, we have agreed with UK representatives on the ground in ORHA that the first secondees (12) from the UK should arrive in theatre from 5 May (local conditions are such that it does not make sense for them to arrive earlier as we had originally hoped).

Good progress is being made with identifying a first tranche of volunteers to join ORHA in line with this timetable. Sir Michael Jay wrote to Permanent Secretaries on 22 April setting out the initial priority areas where we are looking to provide support to ORHA (indicative list enclosed). We have had early offers of volunteers from some Departments including HM Treasury, the Lord Chancellor's Department and DCMS, with skills or experience in areas relevant to the priority areas we identified. The Cabinet Office are following up urgently with other Departments with priority skills to offer and I assume that DFID will be replying to you direct on the staff whom they are seconding for this work. We are also identifying further FCO officials for the governance and civil affairs teams. We have worked up a package of allowances and support for all secondees, and will be conducting a first round of briefing and pre-departure preparation next week.

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It is important to bear in mind that there is as yet no certainty as to conditions in the Iraqi Ministries, most of which have been looted or bombed. ORHA is an organisation in the midst of rapid expansion in a difficult environment. It has also been affected by continuing inter-agency disagreement in Washington over its role and objectives. Against this background it has not been possible to draw up detailed job descriptions for our secondees. We are instructing them to take a flexible, pragmatic approach to their work, aiming to be proactive in identifying how they can best add value in support of Coalition Phase IV objectives. We are also requesting this first wave to report back with early recommendations for deeper UK engagement in specific areas.

#### Funding

You will have seen Anna Bewes' letter of 23 April. Ministers agreed at the Ad Hoc Ministerial Meeting on 24 April that officials should meet on 25 April to finalise the modalities for administering the £60 million earmarked in the Central Reserve for Iraq.

#### ORHA regional lead

Ministers also agreed on 24 April that we should offer to play a leading role in an ORHA south eastern regional headquarters, provided it is confirmed that it will be coterminous with the emerging UK-led security sector, and that we will not pay programme costs. Formal agreement will follow the scoping visit by senior Whitehall officials (which has been delayed by bad weather in theatre, and is now scheduled to depart for Baghdad on 25 April).

We will report further following the scoping visit, updating you at the same time on progress with secondments.

I am copying this letter to Anna Bewes (DfID), Peter Watkins (MoD),  
(HMT), (DTI), David Brummell (Attorney General's  
Office), and Sir Andrew Turnbull and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

(Kara Owen)  
Private Secretary

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