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13 May 2003

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CALL ON DEFENCE SECRETARY BY WALT SLOCOMBE: 13 MAY 2003

Introductory call. Slocombe recognises need for security in Baghdad. Outlines approach to new Armed Forces. Mr Hoon offers to support with advice and practical assistance. Slocombe aware of need for broad security sector reform.

1. Walt Slocombe, (Senior Adviser for the Ministry of Defence Iraq and the Iraqi National Defence Force) called on the Defence Secretary on 13 May 2003. Mr Slocombe was accompanied by his Deputy, Lt Gen Luis Feliu, and Glyn Davies (Deputy Head of Mission US Embassy). You attended together with PUS.

General Security Situation

2. The discussion opened with consideration of the general security situation in Iraq. Mr Hoon, drawing on the example of those towns which "self liberated", said that the important thing for security and development of a local political process was the confidence of the population that the old regime had

gone. In Baghdad this was still somewhat lacking. Mr Slocombe said that when a system which was dependent upon repression was removed, some of the consequences could be unpredictable. He recognised however, as did Bremer, that public order was a necessary responsibility of any Government. Mr Hoon described the Joint Commission Process, and the apparent psychological need of Iraqis to see a visible security presence as they had under the previous regime. Coalition forces were unsuited to providing this sort of static role. Mr Slocombe said that he recognised, as did Bremer, that the challenge was to change the perceptions of people, especially in Baghdad. This would need a visible and functioning police force, which might require some compromise on "de Ba'athification". A police force would only have the requisite effect if there was a proper power structure behind it. The police would have to have a fundamentally different approach from that under the old regime, where they were able to rely on a web of informers.

New Iraqi Armed Forces

3. Mr Slocombe outlined briefly the plans for development with the new Iraqi Armed Force. He emphasised that this would be a new Army, rather than a reconstituted version of the old. It would require new institutions, with new units and new uniforms. He characterised this approach as "no Generals need apply". He had a target to start a military intake on the 1 June to build a Corps; with time and suitable Iraqi interlocutor they would be able to create a Ministry of Defence and a proper force structure. He hoped this could be a coalition effort, and would be looking for coalition contributions from a broad range of countries. Mr Hoon outlined that we should be able to help [you agreed to liaise with Mr Slocombe's team in order to progress this offer]. Continuing, Slocombe described how the Army would be singular, without ethnic units or ethnic structures. Although there would be a role for contractors in the training, he was keen to ensure that there was a proper military face to at least the early provision of training. The challenge with training the Iraqis was not in basic military skills, more in engendering a mental approach to Service in the Armed Forces. There was then a discussion of other countries where Armies had been built to serve and stabilise a nation, citing Turkey, Sierra Leone and South Africa. Mr Hoon offered to share our corporate experience in creating such Armies. Slocombe was receptive to this. (I would be grateful if you could ensure that our experience in for example Sierra Leone, is passed to Slocombe's organisation).

Security Sector Reform

4. Slocombe said that he was looking for international support in the reform and development of a new police force. Mr Hoon recognised that this had to take place in an overall security sector reform process including Lawyers, Judges, Prison Officers and other. Slocombe said that he thought a gendarmerie would be useful. Paradoxically if we managed to create a new Iraq on the model for which we were aiming, it would build in a number of internal security challenges (for example Shia fundamentalists would reject the secular approach).

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Slocombe's Programme

5. Slocombe then explained his outline timetable: he would be arriving in Baghdad on Thursday, staying for a week and returning to the US via Canberra. He expected to stay in the US for one week to 10 days before returning to Baghdad. For planning purposes he was expecting to go on 10 June.



M J WILLIAMS
Cdr RN
APS/Secretary of State

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Meeting between the Secretary of State and Mr Walt Slocombe - Senior US Advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence and Defence Forces

OBJECTIVES

- Underline the importance of a comprehensive framework for security sector reform.
- Impress on US the importance for both short-term security and medium term stability in Iraq to conduct an effective and suitably broad-based Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme.
- Persuade US of the need for timely action to get security situation under control so that:
 - the 'self protection' argument is not used to justify private militias and security guarantees issued by factions.
 - ex-military personnel have a clear understanding of how their skills can be deployed in the future and hence know how they may provide for their families other than through recourse to banditry.
- Determine US intentions with regard to security guarantees for Iraq. What will the US underwrite ? (From this flows scale and structure of Iraq defence forces).
- Explain that UK has expertise in the military and civil governance aspects of SSR and is keen to contribute.

KEY MESSAGES

- There is an absolute need to ensure an holistic approach to SSR which matches security needs across justice, policing, internal security, defence and intelligence - and has clear constitutional, legal and political legitimacy.
- However - we cannot wait for a fully crafted SSR concept; need now is for transparency in setting down:
 - Nature and scope of security guarantee.
 - Intentions with regard to ex-military personnel and reform of the Iraqi Military.
 - Policy on securing weapons of all type - noting the need for a culturally aware solution that recognises regional attitudes.
- Need now to plan for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). What are ORHA's plans in this area ? Funding is a major issue - UNDP and World Bank have valuable experience in this area.
- The reform process itself must be perceived as being owned and led by Iraqi Officials that have been appropriately appointed and authorised to govern.
- What announcements will the US be making regarding the fate of ex members of the Special Republican Guard, Fedayeen etc ? Reconciliation or retribution ?