

DECLASSIFIED

SMA  
PUS office

From: David Manning

Date: 2 July 2003

S 296/03

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell  
Sally Morgan  
Alastair Campbell  
Matthew Rycroft  
Nicholas Cannon

## IRAQ: YOUR VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH PRESIDENT BUSH

We are putting up briefing under a Note from Matthew. It will cover the agenda headings I have agreed with Condi.

This is a key exchange.

There are a number of vital messages to put across. Top is security. The signs point to this getting worse not better. We need to understand what is happening and regain the initiative. Accelerated political and economic development, now both essential, will be impossible unless we deal with – and are seen to be dealing with – the security situation. We face a crisis of confidence both in Iraq and internationally. We need to get on top of this in weeks, not months.

Are we dealing with isolated episodes of criminality and terrorism, as Rumsfeld argues, or is this the beginning of something much more like organised guerilla war? Have we got enough troops? The US Administration (and our own MOD) seem to be arguing that we have. Personally I strongly doubt it.

DECLASSIFIED

328

DECLASSIFIED

- 2 -

I am not convinced that the Bush White House fully understands what a critical juncture we have reached, although declining opinion polls will have their own persuasive impact. Bush needs to hear the alarm now. He needs to focus, and to galvanise action, if we are not to risk finding ourselves increasingly embattled in Iraq and unable to achieve a successful post-war settlement.

My blueprint would be:

- surge large numbers of additional troops into Iraq very rapidly to get us through the current security crisis. (I suspect our own MOD would disagree; DOD certainly would.)
- accelerate the reconstruction programme. We should tackle the power/water/services nexus of problems on a crash, wartime footing. We should spend what it takes, sending in new power generating equipment etc, and protecting it. The problems are big but the price of failure is bigger;
- promote a very vigorous political programme which puts a premium on (UN backed) Iraqi participation. We need to get the Governing Council in place next week. This should be accompanied by a highly effective media strategy (still a disaster area).

These are all parts of a whole; all need to be tackled with real urgency. But security underpins everything.

DECLASSIFIED

- 3 -

Iran

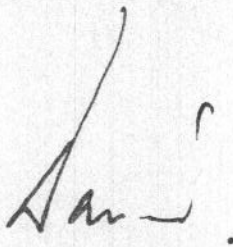
\_\_\_\_\_ The US, and Bremer in particular, have convinced themselves that the Iranians are the source of much, if not most, of the current security difficulties.

\_\_\_\_\_. The JIC accepts that the Iranians are meddling but does not subscribe to Bremer's much more extreme analysis.

We know Bush is being urged by Bremer to take \_\_\_\_\_ action \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What would we achieve?

Has the Administration calculated the impact on Iran (the law of unintended consequences)? We need to be sure that this is a thought-through policy .



DAVID MANNING

DECLASSIFIED