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VISIT TO IRAQ: 31 AUGUST TO 3 SEPTEMBER

1. Some impressions and recommendations from my visit, during which I spent two days in Basrah (a day with MND(SE) and a day with CPA(S)), and two days in Baghdad with CPA and BOB, where I called on a range of Iraqi, UN and CPA officials in a packed programme arranged by Chris Segar and his team. I am corresponding separately (not to all) on some specific action points which need following up.
2. The visit confirmed my impression that the Coalition as a whole is only just beginning to come to terms with the scale of the task we have taken on. Despite the setbacks of August, the general feeling was that the job was doable, but that we need to throw massive resources at the problem now, with a focus on accelerating the security work and essential services side. The US are now talking in terms of tens of billions of dollars. We need to be thinking in much larger figures than we have to date: hundreds of millions of pounds, if not more, plus a significant increase in staffing in the South and Governorates. I understand that the Prime Minister has focused on this this week and that David Richmond and Hilary Synnott have already submitted recommendations, which cover many of the detailed points I

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would have made. I will not duplicate these. This minute concentrates on some practical recommendations for supporting CPA.

CPA Baghdad

3. UK staffing in CPA Baghdad is about right. The UK Special Representative arrangement of being part of, but separate from, CPA works well and gives us influence. David Richmond was left to do the heavy-lifting with the Governing Council when Bremer went on leave recently, for example, not one of Bremer's formal deputies.

4. Within CPA itself, our staffing is about right, although we need to do some tweaking to ensure that replacement staff are focussed on the Ministerially-agreed priority areas. , David Richmond's Chief of Staff, has a good grip on this. Several secondees expressed concern about the direction of Economic Policy (eg plans to disband/privatise state-owned enterprises), underlining the need for us to get Sir Christopher Kelly out to Baghdad asap to give us some high level clout on economic issues

5. Gary Thatcher, the US media supremo, is now in situ. He appears to have a good grasp of the problems. He followed up on a number of requests he had discussed in London last week. I am pursuing with Alastair Totty.

CPA South

6. CPA South is woefully under-staffed, as are the other CPA regions. It is clear that in the South we will have to fill these positions ourselves rather than rely on third country nationals or CPA Baghdad to provide. We should trust Hilary Synnott's judgement and focus on meeting all the requests he makes, rather than engage in more Whitehall discussion of whether a particular slot is necessary. This will cost more money than we have in our secondees' budget. Some of these staff are needed straight away: others will have to follow in slightly slower time, to fit the availability of accommodations and security assets. The aim should be to meet all these requests by the time the new Head CPA South Office comes on stream in mid October: some staff will need to be there earlier. We will work out a staggered programme with Hilary.

7. Most of these new staff are not going to be civil servants, but specialist secondees. Ideally, many will come from industry (Southern Water, National Power etc) and will encourage the UK private sector to become more involved. Security for UK companies will be an issue, and one we need to discuss with the military. But there are opportunities for using Kuwait as a staging post. Chris Wilton is keen to discuss the possibilities with General Lamb and Hilary Synnott. Andy Bearpark is also due to visit this month.

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8. There will be some requirements for additional FCO staff in Basrah and the Governorates (see below). Hilary would like a Security Manager and SMO, on top of the Private Secretary () we have already found him. I have candidates in mind. The SMO can double hat at the officer responsible for the embryonic bilateral section in Basrah, which will be collocated with CPA South.

Governorates

9. The exact relationship between the Governorates and the Regional Offices is not yet clear and will be discussed at a Bremer-chaired meeting on 6 September. There was a clear sense that strengthening the Governorates was now a priority across the country. Filling these slots, even in the US Governorates, is likely to be a problem. CPA do not have enough staff on their books. We need to do more. Both Hilary Synnott and Pat Kennedy (Bremer's Chief of Staff) stressed the importance of putting Chancery officers, preferably Arabists, in the Governorates. I will pursue with Personnel.

10. Our aim should be to staff our Governorates by the end of September. If we are to do this, we cannot afford to get into protracted negotiations with posts over whether staff can be released. This may mean asking the Board of Management to rule that Iraq is our top priority, that staff who are willing to go can be pulled out of posts at short notice, and that posts be told they will have to carry gaps (with their objectives adjusted accordingly), as you have done for MENA posts.

11. We need to take another close look at security arrangements for Iraq generally for the Governorates. The current ruling that we should not deploy any staff to the Governorates until security assets are in place needs revisiting. It is not tenable to base our policy on a JTAC national assessment of the threats, when there are evidently national variations. We need a policy which takes account of advice from local military commanders who adjust their operating procedures on a daily basis. Security policy needs to be determined in Iraq, not Whitehall.
is looking at the details.

Essential Services

12. Now a top priority. There is likely to be a major boost in efforts over the next two months. CPA is now better positioned to help – 45 Bechtel electrical engineers arrived this week. But there is a recognition that CPA lacks capacity across the country and that much of the burden will fall on the military. Programmes need to be accelerated, even if that cut across the longer-term goal of enabling Iraqis to take on these tasks themselves. The scale of the problem is enormous. Major General Carl Strock who works with Bearpark told me that producing 1000MW of electricity through stand-

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alone generators would require 7.5 million gallons of diesel. Current national consumption of diesel is 15 million gallons. As I left, I was told Bremer was inclined to pursue offers from all neighbours, including Iran.

13. In the short term then, the military will continue to have to bear much of the load, until CPA and the Iraqi Ministries develop their capacity. Planning should, however, be a joined up affair involving CPA experts, their Iraqi counterparts, and the military to draw up a division of responsibilities. I suspect this will mean MND(SE) will need more troops. We (and Hilary Synnott) should be consulted on the MOD's force review and tasking exercise. There are areas eg security for CPA secondees in CPA South and the Governorates and the protection of KBR (the company who provide life support to CPA South and are building their new HQ) where we need more military assistance in the short term.

British Office Baghdad

14. BOB have now moved into the villa in the Secure Area. This is right. It is far easier for them to operate from there. My visit brought home to me that there is a clear and distinct role for a separate British Office to pursue bilateral interests and begin developing long-term contacts. Chris Segar and his staff have already built up an impressive range of contacts. To demonstrate their independence, the new Ministers are keen to deal with bilateral missions, rather than CPA officials. There is much work to be done and with 25 Governing Council members and 25 Ministers, David Richmond will be hard pressed to keep in touch with them all.

15. There are also many opportunities for TPUK and British Council. Expansion plans should, however, be moderated to match the availability of accommodation and security assets. I wonder whether in the long-term we should be looking to take on a new site for the embassy, which we can properly fortify, rather than reoccupy the old, historical, but undoubtedly vulnerable site. The move to CPA gives us the chance to think this through properly.

[Signed: *Neil Crompton*]

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