



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

**RESTRICTED**

**DECLASSIFIED**

The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

16 October 2003

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jack Straw', written over the typed name.

**IRAQ RESERVE CLAIM: RECONSTRUCTING THE MEDIA NETWORK**

Thank you for your letter of 6 October seeking a Reserve Claim to cover the £13.9m cost of the UK contribution to the new strategy for the Iraq Media Network.

2. I am aware of how important an effective media strategy is to the success of the CPA. However, I am afraid that I cannot at this time agree to a claim of this size for two reasons: first I am yet to be convinced that the proposals as they currently stand would deliver value for money and second I must ask you to explore more fully the use of existing resources.

3. First, I have not yet seen sufficient evidence to convince me that all elements of the UK contribution have been

**DECLASSIFIED**



DECLASSIFIED  
RESTRICTED

costed sufficiently well. There is little detail, for example, of what you expect in terms of football coverage for £6 million and for such a large amount of money this is not acceptable. Clearly, there is some further work to be done on exactly what package you need to achieve the desired effect and exactly how much that will cost.

4. Second, while I of course accept the importance of this activity, this does not mean that it warrants automatic access to the Reserve, which as you know is already fully committed. I would ask you to look again at the resources available within your own department, within other departments and in the Global Conflict Prevention Pool. A partnership should be formed within Government that identifies ways to work towards this objective within existing resources.

5. I am also aware that DFID are planning to spend £6 million on broadcasting in the south of Iraq - almost exactly the same amount of money that you are seeking to spend in Basrah. I would therefore ask that your officials work with DFID to reconcile what we are seeking to achieve in terms of broadcasting in the south and how the costs can best be met.

DECLASSIFIED



**DECLASSIFIED**  
**RESTRICTED**

6. Finally, I am sure you will not want to link this issue to your department's contribution to the UK pledge at the Madrid donors' conference. Given the priority of the UK making a significant pledge, a number of departments have reprioritised resources from within existing budgets and it is entirely appropriate that the FCO do the same. I am grateful that your officials have confirmed that the outstanding £5million from the Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) is available and I would ask that you agree to its release as soon as possible so as to finalise the agreement on the overall package you announced at GAC earlier this week.

7. I share your commitment to effective communications in Iraq and I feel sure that with some creative thinking and further effort across departments, we can avoid a claim on the Reserve in this instance.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Hilary Benn.

**PAUL BOATENG**

**DECLASSIFIED**