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To: The Hague - Conf  
From: THHAX - eTelegrams  
Subject: FW: A:PP:REST:IRAQ: POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION LESSONS  
FROM NAJAF:BAGHD/FCOLN 85:Id=2758676  
Sent: 03 February 2005 09:28:32 GMT

Andrew Price

-----Original Message-----

From: COMCEN Gateway 1a  
Sent: 03 February 2005 10:09  
To: THHAX - eTelegrams  
Subject: A:PP:REST:IRAQ: POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION LESSONS FROM  
NAJAF:BAGHD/FCOLN 85:Id=2758676

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INFO PRIORITY JIC LONDON, MIDDLE EAST POSTS  
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INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON,

SUBJECT: IRAQ: POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION LESSONS FROM NAJAF

#### SUMMARY

1. The speed and delivery of US-led post-conflict programmes has created a permissive environment for large-scale reconstruction to continue almost unhindered in Najaf. Limited read-across to Fallujah, but useful lessons on governance and ownership.

#### DETAIL

2. DFID humanitarian consultants ( ) visited Najaf last week to review progress since August and consider whether post-conflict military and civil approaches have a wider application in Iraq.

3. Najaf is a 660,000-strong predominantly Shia city, containing one of the most important Shia shrines. Despite eventual peaceful resolution, the short conflict in the old city last August resulted in considerable damage. Half the hotels for religious pilgrims (Najaf's main business) were seriously damaged or

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destroyed during the conflict.

4. Visiting now, DFID's consultants found a permissive atmosphere. MNF-I forces are seen positively - for example, military vehicles were frequently given thumbs up signs from local people standing on the side of the road.

5. Much of this can be attributed to an effective post-conflict assistance strategy, channelling a variety of US funds to Najaf in a timely way. Some \$48 million (projects and social payments) are under way or planned for the city. Over 50% of this total was disbursed over the last six months. A critical success factor was completion of more than 156 projects in the first 100 days after the uprising.

6. The US has used a variety of vehicles to fund this. \$3.5m of CERP (Commander's Emergency Response Fund) projects - the US equivalent of UK QIPS - are still ongoing. The Strategic Cities programme was set out by IRMO advisors and funded with PCO funds re-directed away from large infrastructure projects. The programme aimed to achieve stability and a positive image for military command units after the conflict. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives has also channelled significant funds through 11MEU on employment generating projects. The impact on the local economy appears to have been substantial. Naval Engineers have been directly involved in teaching semi-skilled tasks, which appears to have reinforced the positive local perception of the military.

7. A key strength of the approach taken has been engagement by the US military with the local civilian governance structures (Provincial Governor and Mayor). The Governor was particularly appreciative of the contribution from MNF-I. He also said the Deputy Prime Minister had been very helpful in identifying additional funding for Najaf (\$50m pledged).

8. The Governor was however clearly frustrated with the slow response of the government ministries in releasing money to repair infrastructure, particularly in the education sector. This has been despite concerted efforts: senior US figures have travelled to Najaf with the Minister responsible for IIG co-ordination, Minister of Communications Dr Mohammed Hakim, more than once.

9. Some key areas remain a problem: there has been less support to the health sector than any other. Polls continue to highlight the importance Iraqis attach to healthcare, so despite Japanese pledges to support the the Najaf teaching hospital and welcome additional US support in primary health, this is likely to be an ongoing issue.

## COMMENT

10. With the area around the shrine off limits to MNF-I by mutual agreement, Najaf is a peaceful city (apart from the terrorist bombings last December) where more substantial development can now safely take place. It is not entirely typical of other problem cities: low levels of popular support for the August uprising may have made the post-conflict reconstruction environment more conducive, and Najaf's religious status among the Shia community encouraged MNF-I and IIG action. In Najaf, Al-Sadr's supporters were not able to intimidate contractors in the way insurgents have

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been able to do elsewhere. Thus the read-across to the rather more complex Sunni heartland is limited.

11. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the importance of having in place a clear strategy for immediate post-conflict support so that the military can help civilian authorities get instant access to funds, take immediate action, get essential services running and put money into the local economy, starting a virtuous circle leading in the longer term (as in Najaf) to a conducive environment for large infrastructure projects, re-establishment of normal market mechanisms and a benign force profile.

12. Contact: Lindy Cameron on Firecrest.

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