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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Foreign Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister,
and Head of the Defence and Overseas Secretariat

6 September 2004

Dear Mr. Mawman

LESSONS OF IRAQ: WHITEHALL RESPONSES

The Prime Minister is content with the management arrangements for the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit set out in the DOP paper of 20 July. The Prime Minister believes that the staffing of the unit should be kept lean, with an ability to surge as necessary when required. The Chief Secretary suggested that the staffing levels should be kept under review. The Prime Minister agrees.

The Prime Minister is grateful for the collaborative work that has been undertaken to set up this important interdepartmental unit. He would like to be kept informed of the unit's progress. It is important that it remains joined up with all departments. The Cabinet Office will now move forward with the establishment of the necessary committee structures and will organise the first meeting of the agreed steering group in the late autumn.

The Prime Minister is confident that this new unit, by bringing departments together, will greatly improve the government's ability to respond effectively in post-conflict situations. Together with the Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools, this should considerably strengthen the Government's ability to work collaboratively on conflict issues.

However, the Prime Minister is concerned that the Government does not have the same ability in other vital areas of foreign policy. The Strategy Unit work on failing states is showing that we need a system to identify further ahead the countries that need interventions now in order to avoid trouble later. In addition, it can be difficult for the Government to find the money for interventions it sees as obvious priorities but which individual Departments' budgets do not cover. We found this last year after the Iraq conflict.

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- 2 -

The Prime Minister would therefore like consideration to be given to how best to address these remaining gaps. Cabinet Office will chair a meeting in the autumn to discuss this.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of DOP, Sir Andrew Turnbull and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

7.7
Nigel

NIGEL SHEINWALD

Moazzam Malik
DFID

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