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S 26/03

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

27 May 2003

### SECURITY IN BAGHDAD

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 23 May. He accepts the advice but notes that what Bremer told John Sawers, David Richards and me at the beginning of last week was that the exemplary effect of 16 Air Assault Brigade helping with police training, for a strictly limited six week period, would be a valuable contribution to stabilising the precarious security situation in Baghdad. Bremer was clear that the skills of our troops would be particularly welcome, given the difficulties the Americans have had so far and the very short time we have to try to overcome the problems before we run into serious political trouble.

The Prime Minister therefore hopes that US troops will now tackle the issues with the urgency and effectiveness indicated by your letter.

The stakes are very high. No doubt the Chiefs will be encouraging their US counterparts to. As you say, success in Baghdad is crucial. Failure to make rapid progress with the security problems there will prejudice the overall success of the coalition effort in Iraq, not least the remarkable progress UK forces have made in Basra and the south.

The Prime Minister would like a report at the end of this week updating him on what the Americans are doing to deal with the security problems in Baghdad, and the steps they are putting in hand to deal with police training.

I am copying this letter to Simon McDonald (FCO), Anna Bewes (DFID) and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

DAVID MANNING

Peter Watkins, MOD

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