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FROM: Nicola Brewer

DATE: 13 January 2003

CC: Suma Chakrabarti
Carolyn Miller
Alistair Fernie

To: Secretary of State

IRAQ: A STABILISATION FORCE

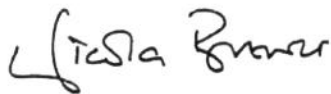
1. You asked me before Christmas to persuade others in Whitehall that any UK military role in Iraq should focus on providing security for the Iraqi people (a 'stabilisation force').
2. I have made some limited progress with MOD and FCO but not with No 10. Peter Ricketts (FCO Political Director) thought MOD would give short shrift to the idea of a stabilisation role, though another FCO official (head of UN Department) saw the policy arguments in favour (summarised in the attached note - A).
3. I've had three goes so far at getting this across to MOD officials. As Carolyn Miller's record attached (B) of my meeting on Friday with Simon Webb shows, MOD are ready to involve us in generic strategic planning but not to share specific dates/locations with us (ie not crossing the operational security barrier). On designing the UK's military contribution around a stabilisation force which would make a demonstrable and rapid difference to the lives of Iraqi people, Simon welcomed DFID input. But he saw this stabilisation objective as complementary to planning for "high intensive war fighting", which the Prime Minister was determined the UK should take part in alongside the US. Simon also wanted to set 'stabilisation planning' in the context of seeking to influence overall US campaign objectives.
4. He and I discussed the idea of a joint DFID/MOD paper on a UK stabilisation role. I think it would be worth doing, as a way of influencing MOD thinking and planning. I will see Simon again in a fortnight's time to take stock of where this has got to.
5. But the MOD will continue planning in parallel for a first phase of high intensity war fighting. (Whether UK forces would get there in time or not, I don't know.) Are you content for us to work with MOD on a strategy for a later phase of stabilisation? I know that your conception is of a UK military role limited to stabilisation. We can try to persuade David Manning (see next paragraph) that this should be our exclusive military focus. But it is the Prime Minister himself whose mind needs to be changed.

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6. You have talked to Suma about the fact that we are still not getting access to all the military planning or intelligence on Iraq. We need to be in on David Manning's regular COBRA meetings; I tried before Christmas and failed. Suma is going to speak to him/Andrew Turnbull about this again this week. You are seeing on Tuesday for an intelligence update.

7. Alistair Fernie is putting up today a draft agenda for a suggested office meeting on Iraq; one has been pencilled in the diary for Thursday, after your meeting with Oshima.



Nicola Brewer

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