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**PRIME MINISTER**

**From: Nicholas Cannon**

**Date: 12 March 2003**

**cc: Jonathan Powell  
Alastair Campbell  
David Manning  
Stephen Wall  
Matthew Rycroft**

### **IRAQ: POST-CONFLICT PLANNING: OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

The 6 March Ministerial discussion of Iraq post-conflict issues did not have time to address a couple of issues flagged up by the Iraq Planning Unit: the **objectives for a post-Saddam Iraqi government** and the **principles that would guide any UK short-term occupation of Iraqi territory**. These questions are not contentious in UK terms: they were cleared in draft across Whitehall. But clear policy approval now would assist our planning for post-conflict operations.

The objectives seek to define the kind of post-Saddam government that we aspire to. It is plainly important that we agree internally and with the US what sort of new Iraqi government we are working for. The objectives bear a resemblance to the "bench marks" drafted by the UN for a post-Taliban Afghanistan. The objectives are not drafted with the aim of their being publicly announced. We shall set out for public consumption, in ways entirely consistent with the objectives, our aims for post-Saddam in our 'vision for Iraq' and other public messages (likely to be held back until we are actually at war: until then we would not wish to be seen to be actively pursuing regime change, or to preclude a restructuring of the Iraqi regime that involved the emergence of a wholly cooperative "Saddam-lite" figure or, in theory, a Damascene conversion by Saddam himself). The objective is an Iraqi government which:

- ☐ Is broad-based, effective and representative.
- ☐ Maintains the territorial integrity of Iraq.
- ☐ Has abandoned its WMD programmes.
- ☐ No longer supports terrorism.
- ☐ Has armed forces and intelligence services that are of an appropriate size (striking the balance between not threatening its neighbours and protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq) and are working towards reform.
- ☐ Complies with its International obligations.

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- Respects human rights and has made significant progress towards a fair and effective justice sector.
- Is no longer dependent on the oil for food programme and working towards a free market economy.
- Is no longer subject to sanctions, and has begun to regularise its relations with international financial and trading organisations, with a view to it not being economically hamstrung by debt and reparations.

The **principles** are those which should guide our occupation, if only short-term, of Iraqi territory. They are pretty uncontroversial. But our military commanders would find this sort of guidance, endorsed by ministers, very useful. Again the principles would be useful (a) with public opinion (b) in seeking to obtain the cooperation or at least acquiescence of local officials and the local population in our area of operations (c) in reassuring the NGO community of our motives, and (d) as a basis for seeking humanitarian cooperation and possibly Phase IV military cooperation from potential international partners. The principles are:

- We shall meet our obligations under International Humanitarian Law.
- We shall minimise the suffering of the Iraqi people.
- Until there is a new UN Security Council mandate, we shall be limited in what we can do to change things in Iraq by our interpretation of International Humanitarian Law and by the laws of armed conflict as they apply to occupying forces.
- Once we have entered Iraq, and if necessary, overcome any resistance, we should help the Iraqi people to help themselves by supporting their own institutions to run the country. From the beginning we will stress publicly that decisions on any new institutions are for them, not for outsiders.
- We shall need to stress that our presence in Iraq is temporary and is to secure compliance with UN resolutions, but we are committed to helping the people of Iraq support themselves over the longer term.
- We shall need to stress that the natural resources of Iraq are for the benefit of the Iraqi people.
- Our involvement in the short term should as far as possible, not exceed the resources that are currently committed, and should keep our options open for the medium term.
- Any evidence of WMD is to be verified by UN inspectors.
- We should seek to internationalise our presence in Iraq as soon as we can.

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If you approve these objectives and principles, the next step would be for Iraq Planning Unit to share them with the Americans. There is no reason to think that they cut across American views in any way.

*Signed : Nicholas Cannon*  
12/03/2003

**NICHOLAS CANNON**

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