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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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from The Foreign Secretary

14 February 2003

cc: DFH
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Dear Matthew,

Iraq: Prime Minister's Speech

In your letter today you requested details on a number of human rights and WMD points the Prime Minister might incorporate into a speech on Iraq.

The answers are as follows:

- a) **Infant mortality.** There are no reliable figures for infant (under-5) mortality in Iraq. The only figures available are those produced by UNICEF in a report in 1999 which compared mortality rates in Iraq in 1994-1999 with those in 1984-1989. The report claimed that infant mortality rates had risen in Baghdad-controlled Iraq from 47 per 1000 in 1989 to 108 in 1999, while in UN-controlled northern Iraq they had fallen from 66 per 1000 in 1989 to 57 in 1999. UNICEF defended their methodology. But the report was based on surveys conducted with the Iraqi regime's "help" and relied on Iraqi figures. These have proved questionable. In 1998, for example, the Iraqi regime claimed a population growth of one million in just six months, giving it the highest birth rate in the world, while at the same time the regime described sanctions as "genocidal". What is clear is that under "Oil for Food" the Iraqi regime could have improved medical care for the Iraqi people if it had chosen to do so rather than to use the Iraqi people's suffering as a political tool.
- b) **Political prisoners.** There is no authoritative figure for this, and the Iraqi authorities do not publish statistics. In October 2002 the Iraqi government announced that it was releasing all prisoners. In the event only criminal (rather than political) detainees seem to have been released, and large numbers, possibly tens of thousands, of political detainees remain unaccounted for. A figure given in a recent petition is 17,000 (though this may reflect the same figure given by Amnesty International as the number of Kurds who "disappeared" in the Anfal campaigns of the late 1980s).

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- c) **Northern Iraq.** A combination of the UN administering the Oil for Food (OFF) programme and Kurdish administrations genuinely wanting to make the programme work have produced results not seen in the rest of Iraq. Health indicators are improving and infant mortality rates are now lower than before sanctions were imposed. Hospitals and schools have been built and improved. Under OFF, USD 18 million has been spent on renovating 41 hospitals in northern Iraq. Similarly there has been a clear contribution by OFF to lives of the Iraqi people in other key sectors: in northern Iraq secondary school enrolment has increased by 74 per cent since OFF began; access to potable water has again improved (to 90 percent of the population in the north and 78 per cent in the centre and southern Iraq); and, 16 fields have been cleared of mines and returned to the Iraqi people

Free from Baghdad government control the Kurds have allowed some semblance of democracy and civil society to emerge with relatively free media, speech and right of association.

However, there are other issues to consider:

- The Kurds in northern Iraq get 13% of the OFF revenues based on them having 13% of the population. The remaining 87% of the population gets 59% of the revenues once the UNCC and administration costs have been taken away.
- Both main Kurdish parties have tried to use the programme as a source of patronage.
- There have been worrying signs of instability in northern Iraq: the PUK/KDP conflict in the early 90s and now the establishment of the extremist Ansar al-Islam.

d) and e) **WMD programmes.** Assessments Staff and DIS are answering the two questions on WMD programmes, and will reply direct to No 10. For information, NPD's views are as follows:

- i) In July 1995, Iraq acknowledged that biological agents had been produced on an industrial scale at al-Hakam. Following the defection in August 1995 of Hussein Kamil, Saddam's son-in-law and former Director of the Military Industrialisation Commission, Iraq released over 2 million documents relating to its mass destruction weaponry programmes and acknowledged that it had pursued a biological programme that led to the deployment of actual weapons. Iraq admitted producing 183 biological weapons with a reserve of agent to fill considerably more.



Iraq maintained that most or all of the decisions relating to its covert WMD programme were made not by the Government but by Hussein Kamil. Prior to his defection from Iraq in August 1995, Kamil held a variety of top positions in the Government such as Minister of Defence, Presidential Adviser, Director of Military Industrialization Commission, Minister-Supervisor, etc. Iraq maintained that the WMD programmes were a personal initiative.

Hussein Kamil returned to Iraq from Jordan after the Iraqi government had announced an amnesty for him (and his brother). They were both executed in February 1996.

ii) The defection confirmed many of our - and UNSCOM's - suspicions about Iraq's programme. However, the information Kamil provided was not exhaustive; nor was UNSCOM allowed by Iraq to confirm all of Kamil's claims. The inspectors were not able at any point to successfully close down Iraq's prohibited weapons programmes, either before or after the defection.

f) The **uprisings** were put down as follows:

In the Shia south of Iraq the uprising was initially encouraged by the Coalition presence, and a clear Coalition indication that Iraqi use of fixed-wing aircraft or chemical weapons against the rebels would not be tolerated (and George Bush's explicit call, in February 1991, on the Iraqi people to force Saddam Hussain to stand down). However, the Iraqi government deployed the loyal and well trained Republican guards and helicopter gunships (which the Coalition did allow the Iraqis to use), the latter used to particular effect in the towns (particularly in the major religious centre of Karbala). The south was effectively secured by the end of March 1991. Many fled to the marshes, and Iraqi forces moved on to relocate the Marsh Arabs and to drain the marshlands to exercise effective control.

The Kurds rose at almost the same time as the Shia, and by mid March 1991 were able to claim that 75% of (Iraqi) Kurdistan was in their hands. Once Saddam Hussain realised that the UN would permit Iraqi troops and helicopters to put down the rebellion he was able to move units of the Republican guard to the north (especially once control had been regained over the south) to regain control of or surround all the major towns. As Iraqi government forces moved in, between 1 and 1.5m refugees moved to the Turkish and Iranian borders. This led to the creation of the "safe haven" for the Kurds in April 1991.



g) Statistics for 1965, 1978 and 2001 for some sample states. These figures should be used as no more than indicators - they are not adjusted for a number of factors and they are not uniformly sourced. The strongest comparisons are the top three, and the comparison between Iraq and Portugal is particularly illuminating.

GDP per capita, US\$

	1965	1978	2001
Iraq	321	2275	1356*
Malaysia	335	1268	3679
Portugal	481	2200	10603
Egypt		<500	1497
Jordan		1000+	1755
Turkey		1578	2229

I hope this is helpful.

K.O.
Kara Owen

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Private Secretary

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