

From Major General J B Dutton CBE



General Officer Commanding
Multinational Division (South East)
Operation TELIC
British Forces Post Office 641

Synergy Red:
DSN:

J7/SSR/7310

Major General P A Wall CBE
Deputy Chief of Joint Operations (Operations)
Permanent Joint Headquarters
Northwood Headquarters
Northwood
Middlesex
HA6 3HP

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Dear Peter

POLICING SE IRAQ

Reference:

- A. DG OP POL/IRAQ/DOP(I)(128/05) dated 17 Oct 05.

INTRODUCTION

1. Following on from DG Op Pol's record of the DOP (I) meeting at Reference A, this letter sets out my views and proposals for action on how to improve management of the existing IPS programme and suggests a way forward.
2. DOP (I) recommended the deployment of Sir Ronnie Flanagan as soon as possible to report on police training in MND (SE). I would very much welcome an early visit: I believe that he will agree with my position (which I share with the Consul General) and hope that he will endorse our agreed strategy.

BACKGROUND

3. It was always the case that progress on IPS transition would be an important part of the conditionality that we would need to achieve before we draw down. As time has gone by, it has become clear that the aspirations in the existing plan are unachievable. We need to be realistic about what we can expect to achieve: we should be aiming for a police force that is relevant and 'good enough' for this Region.
4. It is crucial to understand the nature of the problem and to recognise that there are no 'quick fixes.' Despite a number of uncertainties, overall IPS transition work is continuing. The events of 19 September 2005 in Basra brought the issue into sharp focus and to public attention, but nothing

that happened in that incident will have come as a surprise to anyone who had been involved or who had followed the reporting from MND (SE) over a period of many months. The problems associated with the Jameat Police Station: the lack of control and authority of the Basra Chief of Police and the problems of the divided loyalties of many policemen who are controlled (and indeed in some places planted in the Police) by militant factions, was well known and reported. Knowledge of the problem does not of course make the situation any more tolerable but my point is that nothing changed on 19 September and we should not therefore assume that the existing strategy for police SSR is wholly off-track or now inappropriate, nor should it overshadow the excellent work being done at the tactical level.

THE PROBLEM

5. Whatever happens, there is an inherent disadvantage for trainers since their efforts are set against a wider, more compelling IPS culture that is complex and counters our efforts. Any UK contribution to improving the state of the IPS in MND (SE) must therefore be considered within this wider context. Very much linked to the areas within which they work, the IPS contains individuals whose deep-rooted cultural attitudes, combined with political, tribal and militia affiliations ensure that major fundamental change to the way that they do business will take many years to accomplish. But we can still do, and are doing, a great deal in the shorter term. There is no question that the IPS will continue to operate when we leave; they will have enough training, equipment and bases to operate. Our aim is to attempt to so embed the ethos of democratic policing, and the need for respect for human rights, that the bad elements are ousted by the good. We also need to ensure that, at least an element of them, is ready and able to take lawfully directed action against individuals in the IPS who are involved in crime or terrorism: an internal Iraqi solution is the only sustainable way ahead.

6. It must be remembered that we are dealing with a police force within the Divisional AO of approximately 30,000 that was rapidly recruited with little or no screening. A rank structure was imposed which did not always reflect ability or police experience. There has been, and continues to be, little direction from the MoI, who in any case currently lack the capability to enforce decisions if at the local level they do not agree. This is unlikely to change before the next elections and probably for some time after that. Although there is a flat chain of command, policy and strategy does not appear to be on anyone's agenda.

7. It will, of course, take generations to overcome the adverse tribal, militia and political influences, and the widely held acceptance of corruption as a norm in this part of the world in comparison to Western standards. This will only be overcome with long term education of the community, all levels of governance, and most notably, with time.

THE SOLUTION

STRATEGY

8. We must dismiss any ideas of starting again: it is reform that is required not complete re-design. In common, I suspect, with the rest of Iraq, the issues currently causing concern within the IPS are predominantly culture related and are not simply to do with training. The fundamental point is that reforming the IPS is about more than the training we provide. We must address the systemic issues, because no matter how much good training we can offer, there is no point in training people who are either not interested, beyond help or whose prime loyalties lie elsewhere with factions and militias.

9. However, I believe that there is action that we can take. I have for some time envisaged a fairly simple three-point way forward for the IPS. The first two points are about getting the bad element out of the IPS. My thinking is as follows:

- Removal, (preferably by the Iraqis themselves), of members of the IPS who hold influential positions and are corrupt, conduct criminal acts and/or are not loyal to the aims of the Government. They represent the cancer that affects the acts and deeds of many other officers. If this cannot be achieved by the Iraqis (and I very much doubt that it can by this Government) then MNF will have to act, mindful of course of the consequences. Timing and buy-in will be crucial. I do not see the Iraqis taking decisive action this side of the electoral process: it would require strong central government and effective Governors and Chiefs of Police. Therefore we may have to act on their behalf and detain the really bad ones: probably only a few. We have already started this process: my staff currently has a developing list of 35 targets, of which about a dozen fall into the really bad category. Together with the 8 DIA/CIU officers that we have recently arrested, this will have a disproportionate effect. My aim is to compile a list for Baghdad of the really bad individuals who must be removed.
- Having removed the corrupt and disloyal leaders we can then tackle those policemen who are ineffective, many of whom are not really committed to the militant factions but simply following instructions.¹ This would improve the overall quality of the force and reduce wastage of critical training resources. This needs to be achieved in conjunction with direction from the MoI. While this would not have to include severance pay, its payment would limit potential fallout. The difficult thing is to put measures in place to ensure that those dismissed actually remain so.
- Redoubling efforts on training the remaining police, so that eventually the 'good' outweighs the 'bad' and we achieve a situation where the IPS 'polices' itself internally. Intuitively, more resources focused solely on this specific problem will improve the situation, but I also stress that we must make better use of what we already have.

THE REQUIREMENT FOR GREATER MILITARY INVOLVEMENT TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

10. Whether we like it or not, the military are heavily committed to police transition, to the extent that it would hardly operate without us. This has to be the right approach: if the police are to be the first echelon in the COIN fight, and more generally in the national security system, then success in the delivery of police transition is fundamental to the overall transition plan.

11. In many areas things are going well. Although there are certainly shortfalls in the totality of the training, which have already been identified and are being addressed, in overall terms there has been a great deal of hard (and successful) work done. You are familiar with the range of formal courses and we are making steady progress on that front. Additionally, as part of the SSR (IPS) training effort, we regularly conduct surge operations with the support of MNF specialists including Military Police, and make routine visits to all stations in the AOR, during which refresher training is given in accordance with a set programme and syllabus. There are a lot of soldiers working hard

¹ While there are examples in other provinces, the issue is most pronounced in Basra and I will therefore use it as an example. Chief of Police Basra assesses that he needs to lose about 6,000 from his Force (currently totalling around 13,000).

to deliver best practice, as there are individual policemen. But better management and focus is required to fuse the basic paramilitary advice that the military can provide with specialist police best practice. That needs more active MND (SE) involvement than currently exists.

12. I think it is now recognised that lack of unity of command amongst those who are to deliver transition (MOD and FCO) is a major part of the problem. If we have learned anything from this campaign, it must be that the arrangement that we currently see should not be put in place again. Since reaching a loose accommodation with the SPA back in May, there has been a slightly more joined up approach to the IPS task but we need to go further if we are to accelerate the process and achieve a 'good enough' solution in a reasonable timeframe.

13. Working with the new Consul General and a relatively new and refreshingly broad minded, flexible and energetic CIVPOL team in Basra, we are now much more joined up than we were at the beginning of my tour. That has helped us come to an arrangement with the Consul General, his deputy and the senior Police officer in Basra: we agree the problem and, very importantly, we agree the route to the solution.

14. Therefore, whether the FCO or the MOD have the formal 'lead', the UK should be contributing, as one, to the effort in Iraq. The FCO cannot deliver anything in the south without MND (SE) support. And I have to conduct my transition efforts in accordance with orders from both the UK and MNC/F-I. So there has to be flexibility from all concerned, as well as real commitment and a willingness to work together towards a common goal: this now exists.

15. It remains the case, of course, that the military cannot replace the professional policing skill of CIVPOL and Armor Group. What I believe we should be doing is making best use of their time. We can help achieve this and so make the most of the assets available, but only if the Consul-General is allowed to use his resources more flexibly. In particular, we need to make best use of the skills of the serving civilian police officers and their Armor Group counterparts.

16. There are two particular issues that will need to be resolved:

- Both the CIVPOL and Armor Group employees are subject to contractual obligations: this has not always worked well. For example, we have Armor Group in one province claiming to be responsible only for 'mentoring', and in another, only for 'training'. These issues have to be resolved with clarity in their contractual obligations, line management and employment roles. If we are to play a greater part in the management of these resources then HQ MND (SE) must have full visibility of their terms and conditions of contract so as to improve co-ordination and synchronise capabilities.
- Second we will need to resolve the issue of movement restrictions on the CIVPOL and Armor Group personnel. There appear to be different transport restrictions placed upon civil servants employed by MOD to those working for the FCO and their contractors, CIVPOL and Armor Group (although there are even differences between them). The principal problem is that the FCO and their contractors are not permitted to travel in military vehicles. Often the very safest and most protected form of transport is a Warrior armoured vehicle or armoured Landrover, but these modes of transport are not acceptable to all. I know this is a long-running issue, but unless it is revisited in favour of a more sensible approach, all the professional expertise in MND (SE) will be seriously constrained.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

17. The first leg of the strategy will require political effort to energise the Iraqi Government, but no additional UK resources. The second leg of the strategy will require additional financial investment, but I would hope that this could be found from the Iraqi Government or MNSTC-I. The third leg will, however, require additional UK resources. A recent review of troops-to-task by HQ 12 Mech Bde (responsible for the provinces of Basrah, Maysan and Muthanna) has revealed that due to the threat posed by terrorists, SSR activity has had to be significantly reduced to enable self-protection. There is a clear need for dedicated forces and protected mobility assets to ensure that work with the IPS is not further impeded. The highly successful practice of conducting surge operations into IPS stations and headquarters generates a need for force protection, but this very need for force protection dilutes the amount of effort available to conduct SSR. Our ability to deliver this will depend on the FCO willingness to revisit their travel restrictions. However, in the hope that MOD will be able to make progress on this we have based our plans on the assumption that the FCO will be able to change their position.

18. The review has indicated that an increase in force levels would significantly speed up and enhance the overall SSR effect. The minimum extra forces required are:

- Two companies of infantry with integral protected lift (Warrior or armoured LR, as dictated by FCO force protection requirements).
- Six RMP Warrant Officers, to strengthen the interface between the military and civilian resources in the 2 task forces and the 3 Battle Groups.
- Six SPS NCO clerks to assist in the administration of the training teams, again at each TF and BG location. Their purpose would be to enhance the reporting process, administration and routine management of issues such as leave and replacements.
- One RMP Capt to act as SO3 SSR (IPS) with responsibility for day-to-day co-ordination and liaison of this revised process and structure.

19. As well as these military resources, we seek the following:

- Greater output from the CIVPOL and Armor Group assets in Theatre. Their numbers and the tasks to which they are committed are currently under review. It is my opinion, shared by Ch Supt Haverly, that there is scope for adjustment, which may enhance levels of management and performance/effect.
- I have also made a bid to MNC-I for a US MP Coy (-) to take the lead in coordination and support at the Joint Training Academy at Shaibah. This key MNSTC-I project is currently not performing as required and additional US resources would seem to be the ideal solution. If these resources are not forthcoming then we will have to seek these additional assets from elsewhere.
- An approach has been made to HQ CPATT for additional International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) to enhance current SSR activity. During a recent conference with CPATT they have acknowledged that they are confident in our approach and are moving in a similar direction with their 'Police Partnership Program - Provincial' (P3-P), which utilises joint civilian and military teams.

SUMMARY

20. In summary, I would reiterate that the key issue with IPS reform and development is not that of training but of understanding and building on the Iraqi requirements. Training will improve their performance, but will not overcome adverse cultural issues such as tribal, political, religious and militia influences, which have become ingrained over generations. Together with the Iraqi authorities, we need to establish an effective and enduring IPS, appropriately resourced with skills, equipment and infrastructure. I re-emphasise that I do not believe that the current process is broken. Events in Basra on 19 Sep 05 simply brought starkly to wider attention the problems with which we have been living for some time. Our policy was always to reform the Police along the lines suggested. There is good reason to believe that this will work. The excellent progress that has been made with the IA and DBE shows us that if the raw material is good enough, and that militia influence is minimised, the outcome is satisfactory. We need time, patience and the right level of resourcing.

As ever,

Jim

Information:

Mr James Tansley, Consul General (Basra)