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Multinational Division (South East)

The Office of the British Embassy
Basra

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London

THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: APPLICATION IN SOUTHERN IRAQ

1. At the Iraq Strategy Group on 25 January, Nigel Sheinwald asked for a written description for the Prime Minister of how the new civilian-military structures in Basra would function. This joint letter reflects discussion in the Southern Iraq Strategy Group. It also reflects input from Dominic Asquith. It represents an accommodation between the military and civilian methods of operating with the reality of Theatre and demonstrates the willingness of both to work closely together.

Military action should be subordinate to the political line of operation

2. Experience in Southern Iraq has shown that, if we are to implement a genuinely Comprehensive Approach we need to integrate civilian and military efforts more effectively in pursuit of shared goals. The doctrinal inspiration for the emerging arrangement is contained in General Sir Rupert Smith's Utility of Force: "*The difficulty with the conduct of our modern operations is in harnessing the efforts of all agencies in theatre to a single purpose*". The profile of the security concerns in Southern Iraq should not obscure the fundamentally political nature of the end state we are pursuing. Military action must be supportive of the political and civilian lines of operation.

We need a single plan

3. The Better Basra Plan sets out our strategic objectives in Basra, integrating the civilian and the military lines of operation. We should note that the scope of the multinational military chain is broader than the civilian reporting line. We have sought to address this by consulting our key partners in the south. They broadly concur with the approach and benchmarks set out in Better Basra. While we cannot direct their civilian

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efforts, through informal co-ordination we will work to deliver a unified effort to deliver Better Basra.

4. Our aims in Southern Iraq are a subset of our objectives for Iraq as a whole. We will not achieve our desired outcomes in Basra without the full engagement of Gol and our Coalition partners, particularly the US. The political core of Better Basra reflects the need to lever influence through Gol to encourage stronger co-operation and leadership from Basra's provincial authorities.

5. The revised structures also reflect the need for greater coherence with Baghdad. Through the CG, we will maintain a close working link with the Embassy, using this to ensure our messages on Basra reach the right audience in central government. Maj Gen Shaw will work with Corps and SBMR-I to reinforce these messages, ensure that our military line of operation is accepted by Corps and Force, and explain them within the context of our wider political strategy.

6. The Consul General is responsible for driving forward the political and civilian aspects of the plan, in close co-ordination with HMA Baghdad, departments in London and key partners. The GOC MND(SE) is responsible for developing and delivering the military line of operation as instructed by PJHQ and MNF(I) in support of the political plan. The Consul General will send a consolidated weekly report, agreed with the GOC, covering strategic issues across all lines of operation. The GOC will continue to send a weekly letter to CJO.

Delivery of the Plan

7. Delivery of the overall plan is driven by MND(SE) and the civilian agencies. In practice MND(SE) will provide management horsepower to help deliver Better Basra, working in partnership with the BEOB staff (including the PRT) and other agencies (e.g. US REO, USAID, GRS).

8. The role of the **Southern Iraq Strategy Group (SISG)** is to oversee delivery of the strategic objectives set out in Better Basra. It is chaired by the Consul General and brings together the key players including the GOC. The Head of the US Embassy Regional Office, while not directed by SISG, attends and plays an active role. The SISG provides strategic direction, drives forward delivery and monitors implementation. It provides a mechanism to resolve as many issues as possible in theatre and identify issues where leverage is needed in Baghdad. Its focus is wholly strategic, concentrating on the political plan, agreeing the approach to engagement of provincial leaders and looking across the other lines of operation to see how they can further the aims of the political plan.

9. The SISG takes strategic direction from and reports on progress to the Iraq Strategy Group / Iraq Senior Officials Group. The SISG will also act as the link to Baghdad, advising HMA Baghdad when political action is required at the centre. The weekly reports by the CG and GOC will cover strategic issues. Minutes and a list of action points arising from SISG meetings will also be copied to the ISG/ISOG.

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10. The SISG will meet every second week. To ensure that the SISG remains free to act as a genuinely strategic body, day to day co-ordination of effect will fall to the appropriate working groups covering specific lines of operation. They will report weekly to the **Operational Effects Group** (OEG), which will take its strategic direction from the SISG and in turn will direct the various working groups. The OEG will ensure coherence across the lines of operation and ensure that activity supports strategic objectives, identifying issues of strategic importance that need to be drawn to the attention of the SISG.

11. The **working groups** will cover each strand of the Better Basra Plan and will be chaired by the appropriate subject matter experts. Working groups on several strands already meet, both in coalition format and including their Iraqi partners.

[Signed]

Major General J D SHAW CBE

[Signed]

Dr Rosalind Marsden

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