



From:

Private Secretary

Date:

26 March 2003

cc.

PS/PUSS
PS/Suma Chakrabarti
Nicola Brewer
Mark Lowcock
Carolyn Miller
Moazzam Malik

Mike Green

Special Advisers

Alistair Fernie

IRAQ: MEETING WITH SECRETARY OF STATE

The Secretary of State held an office meeting on 26 March to discuss Iraq. The PUSS, Suma Chakrabarti, Nicola Brewer, Carolyn Miller, I, Anna Bewes, you and I were there.

2. The Secretary of State reported on her conversations with the Chancellor and the Prime Minister. The Chancellor had not been clear about the figures but indicated he could meet some, but not all, of our bid. He planned to make an announcement tomorrow. The Secretary of State commented to the meeting that she would still like to speak to him again before the final decision was made [**Action: Private Office to arrange**]. The Secretary of State had praised the PM for going to talk to Kofi Annan. The important thing was for the world to know that a resolution for a UN mandate was coming. The Secretary of State had advised him to speak to Chirac on his way to Washington.

3. Officials reported that there was a sense in Whitehall that a resolution on reconstruction might not be achieved. You emphasised that we were clear that we would need a UN resolution for significant engagement. noted that early FCO thinking on a "Baghdad Conference" similar to the Bonn Conference for Afghanistan had suggested it might not be under UN auspices. However, the FCO legal advisers had advised that any administration appointed under such a conference would hold no legitimacy unless there was a UN resolution to convene the conference. The Secretary of State was firm that under the Geneva and Hague Conventions no changes could be made to the administration by the occupying

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powers, except in order to keep systems working for civilians. The Secretary of State noted that the Attorney-General had been clear on this at this morning's PM meeting, and that the PM was also clear on this. She felt that the Attorney-General's advice on the reconstruction resolution should be committed to paper and asked that Private Office convey this to the Attorney-General's office [**Action: Private Office – done**]. Nicola reported that this had been agreed. The Secretary of State wondered whether she should raise the UN resolution on reconstruction with the Foreign Secretary. It was agreed that she would do so by phone after the Attorney-General's advice had been issued [**Action: Private Office to arrange**].

4. The Secretary of State noted that the Prime Minister had given her responsibility for reconstruction in Iraq. This should be underpinned by a Cabinet Office Committee chaired by Suma. This area was our lead in Whitehall and we needed to ensure that this was recognised. Suma noted he had spoken to Gus O'Donnell and to Andrew Turnbull about this. It was agreed that he should write to Turnbull [**Action: Alistair Fernie/Suma Chakrabarti**]. suggested that it would be helpful – in order to avoid the problems that were encountered on Afghanistan – to begin thinking about security sector reform using the Global Pool mechanisms. The Secretary of State agreed.

5. reported on developments in the humanitarian situation. The situation with IDPs in the north and on the borders was stable. Neighbouring country authorities were gearing up in case there were larger movements. The ICRC in Baghdad was focusing on arranging alternative water supplies and providing generators for hospitals and other health care facilities in order to avoid the problems being encountered in Basra. In Basra, there were reports that the Iraqi military were raiding civilian medical supplies. There were also reports that civilians who had been friendly to the coalition forces were now facing retribution. Offloading of supplies from Sir Galahad had been delayed owing to storms. However, although there were perishables aboard that needed to be offloaded, food in general was not a problem in Basra or Umm Qasr.

6. The Secretary of State noted that work on Iraq currently had to be prioritised, but it was essential that staff were not working unsustainable hours, as this was bad for staff and bad for the work of the Department. We needed to ensure that we had enough people and were operating shift systems which allowed people time off.

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