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9 May 2003

Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

London SW1A 2AH

*Dear Matthew*

Iraq: ORHA

cc: DM  
NC  
DLH  
JPC

**Summary**

Good progress in stepping up the UK military and civilian contribution to ORHA, on the basis recommended by General Cross. But ORHA's performance on the ground remains inadequate: Paul Bremer, the US special representative appointed by Bush, will be the key to improving its cohesion and effectiveness. It may be necessary for the Prime Minister to tackle Bush again on this. We are engaging with the US on ORHA priorities, especially Security Sector Reform.

**Detail**

Thank you for your letter of 6 May. What follows has been agreed with DFID and MoD.

UK contribution to ORHA

We have made good progress in pushing forward the UK contribution to ORHA. Five additional military personnel specifically requested by General Cross to increase ORHA's operational effectiveness are either in Baghdad or en route. In addition, General Cross's team has been strengthened through the posting of a chief of staff. On the civilian side, 34 volunteers from across the public service have this week undertaken a pre-deployment training course provided by MoD to prepare them for the difficult security conditions in Baghdad. A further 11 volunteers will be trained next week.

A first batch of 22 of these trained secondees is due to depart for Iraq on 13 May, drawn from departments including the FCO, the Treasury and Departments of Trade and Industry, International Development, Health and Culture, Media and Sport. A similarly-sized group will follow a week later. We will be tasking all of this first wave of secondees to report back with specific recommendations for further UK support in their areas of expertise. We are still seeking assurances from ORHA on security arrangements, accommodation, and other support for UK secondees – we hope these will be in place by the end of this week.

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The key to ORHA's success will be achieving results with the Iraqi ministries in Baghdad, and this will be our main effort. But we will also provide a total of 10 secondments to the ORHA southern regional office in Basra which will be working with UK forces in the area under the leadership of Ole Oleson a Danish official (their Ambassador in Damascus – a Muslim and an Arabic speaker).

We are also providing specialist help with the re-establishment of Iraqi law-enforcement capability. A team of four senior police advisers, led by a serving Chief Constable, will travel to Iraq on 13 May to advise on the stabilisation of the security situation and participate in a comprehensive review to assess how best to rebuild the Iraqi police service. They will visit both Basra and Baghdad, and will work with an international team of policing experts carrying out a full assessment of the Iraqi police service. This will include existing policing capacity, infrastructure, salaries/payment arrangements and public confidence in the police. They will identify possible areas for a more substantial UK contribution. One of the team will then join the ORHA policing team on a longer term attachment.

The DFID contribution includes a liaison team attached to ORHA which will focus on humanitarian issues, including donor co-ordination, health, water and sanitation, food and other sectors. Their role will be to facilitate relations between ORHA officials, Iraqi administrators and the UN agencies which are now establishing themselves on the ground in Iraq. Security conditions permitting, the DFID liaison team will be the nucleus of the future UK development presence in Iraq. In addition to the liaison team, DFID will provide an adviser to General Cross and specialist advisers to UK 1 Division in Basra.

#### ORHA management

You mentioned the Prime Minister's concerns about the management of ORHA, and its failure so far to make a significant impact on the problems on the ground in Iraq. At all levels, ORHA's performance to date has been inadequate. We know from Embassy reporting that these concerns are shared at the top of the US Administration.

The President's appointment of Paul Bremer as special representative should help ORHA focus its efforts more effectively, and bring its work into line with the political track being pursued by Khalilzad. It is encouraging that Bremer appears to have the support of both the State Department and the Pentagon, and the personal qualities and Washington inter-agency contacts needed to bring order to what has so far been a dysfunctional organisation. We have stressed to the Americans the importance of Bremer's arrival not

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precipitating the early departure of Garner who,  
, has established a loyal following among ORHA staff in  
Baghdad.

We welcome the Prime Minister's emphasis in his conversation with Bush on 7 May on the need for ORHA to achieve early practical results. We hope the Prime Minister would be willing to take this up again if we do not see an early improvement in the US performance – with improvement in security in Baghdad an early priority. Stopping the civil war within the administration in Washington would be a key step to improving ORHA's its performance - though inter-agency conflict appears endemic.

#### ORHA priorities

You asked about ORHA's main priorities. ORHA's top priority is to restore what is left of Iraqi public administration so that people can return to work and basic services can be delivered once again. There is a long way to go – there is, for example, as yet no system in place to pay salaries for public sector workers. Progress has been slowed by the extensive damage caused by bombing and looting to Iraqi Ministries: in most cases the buildings themselves are empty shells without infrastructure of any kind. It is clear that the US were not prepared for this level of destruction (for example, the failure to provide the capability to type or reproduce documents in Arabic).

However, UK secondees already in ORHA report from Baghdad that the human resources of the Iraqi administration are beginning to reassemble, and are capable. ORHA is now working with 19 Iraqi ministries: examples of tangible progress include the Baghdad fire brigade, where 900 of 1300 staff are now at work and the traffic police, who are increasingly visible. The UN agencies are also beginning to play a role in fostering the recovery of public services. It will be important to build rapidly on this progress as ORHA prepares to hand over its responsibilities as the IIA is established.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) is a key element of ORHA's work. A 65 strong US team is due to arrive in theatre on 25 May, led by Walt Slocombe (Deputy Secretary in the Pentagon during the Clinton administration, and well known in London). Ministers agreed a strategy for SSR at the Ad Hoc Group on 8 May. Efforts in the coming weeks will focus on encouraging the US to adopt a holistic approach which takes account of the linkages between defence, internal security, policing and the judiciary (and thereby avoids the mistakes of the more segmented approach taken by the US in Afghanistan). Ministers also agreed to the secondment of UK experts into the US SSR team,

All this will be discussed when Slocombe sees  
Ministers in London on 13 May.

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General Cross's concerns

General Cross's main requirements are for more staff. These fall into two main categories: military enablers to staff the infrastructure of ORHA, and civilian experts to take forward the engagement with the Iraqi ministries. The new deployments of military and civilian personnel outlined above mean his current requests are close to being fully met. We are in daily contact with General Cross and he is content with the current state of play. We are also beginning work to identify a senior civilian to take over from him when he leaves ORHA, probably during June.

A separate letter follows with an update on the IIA.

I am copying this letter to Anna Bewes (DFID), Peter Watkins (MoD), Tony Brenton (Washington) and Desmond Bowen and John Scarlett (Cabinet Office).

(Kara Owen)  
Private Secretary

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*We must make sure Cross  
gets what he needs.*

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