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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

17 October 2003

London SW1A 2AH

Dear Nigel,

Iraq: Security and Policing

At the Iraq Senior Officials' Group meeting on 14 October you asked for a note on public security and policing in Iraq, and action being taken to improve them. What follows has been agreed with MoD and the Home Office.

Public security

We agree with the JIC assessment that the security environment in Iraq will remain difficult, and could get worse. Former regime elements continue to undertake frequent attacks on Coalition Forces in the Sunni areas north and west of Baghdad and to inflict a regular stream of casualties on US forces. Meanwhile, Islamic extremist groups, including Ansar-as-Islam and Al Qaida are becoming more active and organised, as are 'Mujahedin' organisations. These groups are probably behind increasingly regular and sophisticated terrorist attacks on civilian, international and Iraqi Governing Council targets in Baghdad.

Wider public security has also been affected this week by fighting in Karbala between followers of Muqtada al-Sadr, an extremist Shia cleric, and the Shia mainstream led by Ayatollah Sistani, in the course of which US soldiers and Iraqi policemen as well as Shia militiamen have been killed. Bremer plans to arrest al-Sadr in the near future for his part in the murder of Abdul Majid al-Khoi in April and is well aware of the importance of ensuring that the arrest is handled in a way which minimises the likelihood of further violence.

The UK AO has been relatively quiet, though there was a rocket attack on the Brigade HQ in Basra on 8 October. The ability of the Coalition as a whole to achieve its objectives is still clearly vulnerable to this continuing pattern of insecurity. The fact that the majority of casualties are Iraqis has not helped bring the population as a whole onto our side.

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Iraqi-isation

The Coalition response to the security threat has continued to focus on developing the capacity of new Iraqi security forces. A good deal of progress is being made across the board:

- The first battalion of the **New Iraqi Army** completed basic training on 5 October and is deploying to the Iranian border under US military control. A second battalion is now being trained. We expect four battalions to be on active duty by March and 27 by September 2004. A civilian Ministry of Defence will be formed, with UK input, next spring.
- 18 battalions of the **Iraq Civil Defence Corps (ICDC)** are now being trained by Coalition Forces, with the possibility being considered of expanding to 26 battalions. UK forces have been active in training the ICDC in the UK AO. The assessment from theatre is that the ICDC will, as planned, be a useful force multiplier.
- 40,000 members of the **Facilities Protection Service** have been recruited to guard key infrastructure.
- Training for **customs and border police** is due to begin in mid November, with the aim of enabling the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior (MoI) to control Iraq's borders. Substantial funding has been made available from the 2003 CPA budget.
- The US military are considering options for making more effective use of Iraqi **militias**. The more reliable units of the Peshmerga and the Badr Corps are being co-opted by Coalition forces, and Coalition orders to disband private militias have been held back while the issue is considered in more detail.

Policing

We are also making good progress in developing the **Iraqi police**, focussing on the main CPA effort to train 30,000 police in Jordan over the next year. This is now gathering momentum. A senior UK police officer, DCC Douglas Brand, is leading the effort in the CPA in Baghdad to develop an overall policing strategy for Iraq and improve the interaction between the Iraqi police and Coalition forces. Six officers from the MoD Police deployed to Iraq on 17 October to support him.

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We have already deployed a retired police officer to Amman to serve as Deputy Director for the Iraqi police academy. He will work under Steve Bennett, an American who brings experience of running the OSCE police training school in Kosovo. We plan to deploy two further staff officers to the school on 21 October, with seven more available to travel by the end of October. Training is in hand to allow the main group of trainers to deploy in time to train the first batch of Iraqis from 25 November, and for our full contribution of 75 officers to be ready for the first full-scale course in mid December. We will be able to sustain this commitment over the next year, which is the period we estimate will be needed to meet the full training target.

Negotiations between the CPA and the Jordanian government on the terms for the training have taken longer than we had hoped, but a satisfactory agreement is now in sight. We expect signature around 18 October. We have some concern about whether full US funding will be available within the required time-scale: we may at some point need to suggest that the Prime Minister raise this with President Bush.

By agreement with the US we are also helping co-ordinate contributions of police trainers and equipment from EU member and accession states plus other countries such as Canada and Australia with whom we work closely on international peacekeeping. We are holding a conference for senior officials from potential contributing countries in London on 20 October to outline CPA plans and tie down pledges. We are working up separate national plans to provide leadership training for senior Iraqi police officers at the Police Staff College at Bramshill (Centrex).

Our efforts in **Basra** are now focussed on developing the Regional Police Training Academy (RTPA) under the leadership of three senior UK police officers. An initial retraining programme for serving Iraqi police officers began on 12 October under UK management, with the help of trainers provided by Denmark. Plans are in hand to expand the RTPA and a further 24 UK officers are about to start pre-deployment training to allow them to arrive as soon as the new facilities are ready to receive them. This will bring our total police deployment to the level of 100 agreed between the Foreign and Home Secretaries. The Coalition is separately developing two equivalent RTPA facilities in central and northern Iraq.

We judge that the Coalition now has a credible and deliverable strategy to train 30,000 Iraqi police over the next year. Our main concern is the lack of a clear

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framework for the wider development of the Iraqi police and the employment of newly-trained officers on their return to Iraq from Jordan. The CPA have outline plans for a mentoring programme involving 1,200 international police officers. We doubt this requirement can be filled from the international community (the Home Office and ACPO have made clear that they could not envisage UK police officers being used for this role against the current security background). The CPA are therefore likely to provide the officers commercially through Dyncomps, the US contractor which State Department regularly uses to provide police officers for overseas deployments.

The longer term strategy for Iraqi internal security will be the responsibility of the new senior Adviser in the MoI: we understand the US are about to make an appointment to the slot, which has been vacant since early September. We plan to deploy a senior official recently retired from the Home Office with extensive security assistance experience to enhance the MoI's strategic planning capability. It will be essential that this team works closely with the Iraqi Minister of the Interior, Nouri Badran and other members of the IGC Security Committee. There is much to be done: discussion in this Committee of the fighting in Karbala revealed significant differences of approach between the members.

Conclusion

The cumulative effect of the steps outlined above will be to deliver a step change in Iraqi security capability over the next year. This timetable and that for the political process are reasonably well aligned: the new Iraqi government we expect to emerge from the political process during the second half of next year should inherit at least the basis of good defence and police forces. A good start is being made – though much work remains to be done to ensure that the right structures are put in place to ensure proper civilian political control.

These efforts do not, however, provide full answers to the immediate security problems confronting the Coalition. The terrorist threat, especially in Baghdad is unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future: Islamist and other groups have plentiful supplies of men, materiel and motivation for continuing attacks. We have had successes with improved intelligence, and enhanced security measures at key targets have undoubtedly helped reduce casualties in recent weeks. We need to recognise, however, that the Coalition, its Iraqi allies and the international community may suffer more damage in the next few months.

The CPA are now making greater efforts to engage the Sunni population in the problem areas to the north and west of Baghdad: we are playing a leading role in this. MoD are considering ways in which they can help change US military

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tactics in central Iraq (we helped at an earlier stage by training US military trainers in Baghdad through the UK Operational Training Advice Group (OPTAG), and provided tactical radios for foot patrolling). MoD are providing further thoughts in parallel.

I am copying this letter to the Private Offices of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group, to Sir Jeremy Greenstock (IraqRep) and to Sir Hilary Synnott (Basra).

Yours ever,

Jonathan

(Jonathan Sinclair)
Private Secretary

Sir Nigel Sheinwald KCMG
10 Downing Street

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