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The Rt Hon Lord Mandelson

Nick Catsaris  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

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Re 241  
16 January 2009

Dear Nick

Thank you for your letter of 18 December about UKTI resources in Iraq.

Over recent months, and in response to exchanges with Michael Wareing and others, UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has set about re-inforcing its team in Iraq. Over the next few weeks, UKTI will have three new staff operating in the market:

- a new locally engaged Commercial Officer has been appointed in the British Embassy in Baghdad. The individual, who starts work on 19 January, is an ex-Siemens sales engineer and brings valuable private sector experience to the team.

..... recruited as a UKTI International Business Specialist, flies out to Iraq via Amman, Kuwait and Basra on 24 January. He will support British companies on the ground over the coming months, including those wishing to bid in the recently announced Oil and Gas licensing round. He will also scope opportunities for British companies in Iraq and will make recommendations on UKTI's future footprint in the country. We have requested an initial report on this theme by the end of March 2009 - allowing plenty of time to inform our medium to long term planning process and to ensure continuity for British exporters and investors. There will be no gap in our commercial representation in Iraq.

- UKTI is also in the process of appointing an industry secondee from Halcrow to carry out a three month assignment in Iraq. The additional private sector support and knowledge of the infrastructure sector will make a valuable contribution to work and will help to inform his recommendations.

In addition to the new staff, the British Embassy in Baghdad has just recruited a USAID employee into the vacant Commercial Assistant slot in Baghdad. Once in post, this individual should also prove to be a valuable asset to the team. All four of the UKTI staff in Iraq will have the remit of covering the whole of the country - including Basra and Northern Iraq - and will work alongside existing UKTI resources in Amman, Jordan, in maximising the potential for British exporters and investors.

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Finally, I should emphasise that UKTI is working closely with Michael Wareing, DFID officials and others in Whitehall on a broad spread of trade and economic issues - including the proposed visit by Lord Mandelson (which will involve Michael Wareing) and planning for DFID's "Invest in Iraq 2009" conference in April. Both Lord Mandelson and Andrew Cahn have meetings arranged with Michael Wareing over the coming weeks and these present an excellent opportunity for him to feed into UKTI's future planning on Iraq.

I am copying this letter to Tom Fletcher and Jeremy Heywood (No 10), Jennifer Hepker and Simon McDonald (Cabinet Office), Matthew Gould (FCO), (HMT), Matt Baugh (DFID), Rory O'Donnell (DECC), Christopher Prentice (Baghdad) and Nigel Haywood (Basra).

*Handwritten signature*

*Richard Abel*

**RICHARD ABEL  
PRINCIPAL PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PETER MANDELSON**

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