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To: Bandar Seri Begawan -Conf
From: Andrew Caie Bandar Seri Begawan -Conf
Subject: FW: BASRA; BASRA VALEDICTORY: PART 1 OF 2
Sent: 14 February 2004 10:31:27 GMT

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-----Original Message-----

From: Bandar Seri Begawan -Conf
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2004 10:11 AM
To: Andrew Caie Bandar Seri Begawan -Conf
Cc: BSX - Float tels
Subject: TEL: BASRA; BASRA VALEDICTORY: PART 1 OF 2

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FM BASRA TO FCOLN
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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 10
OF 261432Z JANUARY 04
INFO PRIORITY CABINET OFFICE, CANBERRA, DFID, EU POSTS
INFO PRIORITY HM TREASURY, HOME OFFICE, ISLAMIC POSTS, MODUK
INFO PRIORITY OSLO, PJHQ, SECURITY COUNCIL POSTS,
INFO PRIORITY TOKYO, UK TRADE AND INVESTMENT,

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SUBJECT: BASRA VALEDICTORY: PART 1 OF 2

1. The post-conflict occupation and liberation of Iraq will no doubt be analysed in countless books and doctoral theses over years to come. History may judge the initial stages harshly. From my immediate and close perspective of six months engagement soon after the start of the enterprise, it is difficult not to take a similar view. But I am also optimistic that, despite an unpromising start, the underlying objective of the whole endeavour, namely the emergence of a peaceful, prosperous, democratic (of a sort) and un-threatening Iraq, is achievable - although some serious obstacles remain in the way.

2. It is a matter of public record that such contingency planning as was conducted in the US, largely by the State Department and sensible though it was, was dismissed by the Department of Defense, the leaders of the operation. The UK's pre-planning fell short of making practical dispositions; and political direction of resources was complicated by deep differences at Cabinet level. The dismantling of the original ORHA structure in May and its replacement by the Coalition Provisional Authority under Paul

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Bremer was made more complicated in the South by the summary removal of my Danish predecessor, a Sunni Muslim who,

publicly criticised the Americans for neglecting the South in general and his operation in particular. If one wanted to get to the objective, who would have started from there?

3. My sudden appointment at the end of July had the merit of ensuring that the Regional Co-ordinator and the General Officer Commanding in the South were of the same nationality and could thus reinforce each other in dealings with HMG and with the civil and military headquarters in Baghdad. Perhaps we could also hold our own in the competition for attention and resources with the fiery US Generals further north. My three main priorities, outlined to me by the Prime Minister on the day of my departure, were security, infrastructural development, and influencing Iraqi perceptions. Political development would follow on from these. Each aspect was inextricably linked to the others. As an additional target, Cabinet ministers publicly declared that the South would become a model for the rest of the country, although this did not go down too well with the Americans.

4. To the justifiable chagrin of the British military, who had 10,000 troops in theatre, the civil arm in the South, CPA(S), was initially almost dysfunctional. Staffing had developed haphazardly, with arbitrary contributions from several coalition partners, within an inadequate management structure and with no administrative support. There were very few Americans, and only a handful of the 1,750 US Army Civil Affairs personnel who have played such an important role in other Regions in the country. The mainstay of the organisation was the Territorial Army, making use of its varied expertise, with Regular Army reinforcement. The biggest single national civilian component was Japanese: a team of engineers who, although nearly incomprehensible, did some invaluable ground work before they were evacuated by their government.

5. On my arrival, UK Crown Servants comprised three FCO officers, one career DFID officer, several more from other Departments and three police officers. We borrowed computers from the Americans and scrounged Kuwaiti mobiles from where we could. None were available from the FCO. DFID were generous with sat phones and laptops to their contracted staff, whose numbers increased after initial ministerial objections had fallen away. London asked for frequent reporting. I sent it over an unclassified and temperamental Yahoo link using lines through the US, in the absence of any classified means or of any Local Budget to fund something more effective. All this was several months after the end of the conflict and remained like this for several months more. It was also immediately clear to me that the building we occupied, apart from being unsanitary and uncomfortable, was insecure against truck-bombs, RPGs and snipers. On expert advice we set in train the earliest possible move to more secure premises, which we completed in the third week of October.

6. After an initial hiatus, we have had unstinting political support from within HMG. A bid for 37 additional and expert staff, with job descriptions delivered in Whitehall in early September, was endorsed by Ministers immediately. As was a bid in August for \$127m to finance an Emergency Infrastructure Plan,

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using \$30m of new DFID money. These decisions were enormously beneficial and have allowed the Coalition to present more of a civilian face in the South than may have been possible elsewhere. But staff on the ground were saddened by the absence of replacements for staff whose contracts expired after three or six months; and because, by early January, 18 of the 37 new staff had still not arrived. Such difficulties continue, with gaps between key appointments. Direction and guidance from CPA Baghdad has remained light throughout.

7. It is easy to be critical in such circumstances, and for several months I laid about me to get a faster flow of human, financial and technical resources, just as I had two years earlier, in Islamabad, when the Afghan campaign blew up. I was helped in this by many dedicated and hardworking officials at the London end, and by trenchant military support. But it was brought home to me that officials could not be deployed like the military, despite notional mobility obligations; that the contracting processes to employ non-official civilians were lengthy; that these had to be followed by pre-deployment training which was only intermittently available; and that, crucially, Departments' Duty of Care constrained recruitment. I eventually resigned myself to the fact that, whatever the political imperative or the national interest, certain procedures are not capable of being circumvented or accelerated. But, in these circumstances, "as fast as possible" was simply not fast enough. We therefore determined to do the best with whatever was available and to find more resources from wherever we could.

8. It was fortunate that both the Danish and Italian governments chose the South in which to concentrate their contributions to the Coalition's effort. For some months we had more officials here from these countries - 13 each - than from the UK. And we had Czechs, Australians, Serbs, Bosnians, Dutch, Americans, a German, a Norwegian, an Irishman, as well as, ultimately, disproportionate numbers of vigorous Scots and Northern Irish. My staff sought volunteers from among their professional contacts, often with more success than the Crown Agents. The Japanese are now returning to concentrate similarly on the South. All this, and the exceptional efforts of the British armed forces, helped us fulfil tasks undertaken elsewhere by the US Army Civil Affairs battalions.

9. The biggest single asset of the operation has been, and still is, the energy, dedication and resilience of the staff, all of whom are volunteers. Nearly all those who were withdrawn by their governments when the going got rougher in early August (the Japanese and Spaniards) did not want to go. Very few who arrived were sufficiently dismayed by their challenging living conditions that they chose to leave early. Many have volunteered to extend. The reasons for this are simple: everyone here has been at one with the view which the Prime Minister articulated to us during his visit on 4 January: "If we succeed in helping rebuild Iraq for the Iraqis the impact will be enormous"; and because, despite the setbacks, there has been discernible progress. Nobody, therefore, doubts the value of the effort, even if there is sometimes a hesitation, quickly suppressed, about the prospect of success.

10. All of these staff benefited from HMG's duty of care in that, magnificently, DFID procured a large number of armoured vehicles and civilian protection teams for us (the need for which is

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constraining the Americans in other Regions). After some initial rumbling, HMG concurred that these should be used for all CPA(S) staff without distinction, consistent with my own duty of care to CPA staff. They have saved several lives from explosive devices. At the time of writing, and despite my initial assumptions, no CPA(S) civilian has been killed or seriously injured. We have all appreciated the expressions of concern for our well-being and especially, Sir, your personal phone call on Christmas Day.

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To: MADRX - eTelegrams; MADRZ - eTelegrams
From: COMCEN Gateway 1a
Subject: I:PP:REST:BASRA VALEDICTORY: PART 2 OF 2:BASRA/FCOLN
10:Id=1325634
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2004 14:31:21 PM GMT

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LNMCNDN 3082 ZILNAN 0718

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PP ABDHA ACCRA ADABA ALGIE ALKHO ALMAT AMMAN ANKAR ASHGA
PP ATHEN BAHRA BAKUU BANJU BEBER BEIJI BEIRU BREEC BREMB
PP BRNAT CAIRO CANBE COPEN DAESS DAKAR DAMAS DHAKA DJIBO
PP DOHAA DUBAI DUBLI FREET GEMIS GIBRA HELSI HOSEE ISLAM
PP JAKAR JEDDA JERUS KABUL KHART KULUM KUWAI LISBO LUAND
PP LUXEM MADRI MEXIC MOSCO MUSCA NAIRO NEDEL NYMIS OSLOO
PP PARIS RABAT RIYAD ROMEE SANAA SANTI SARAJ SOFIA STOCK TEAVI
PP TEHRA THHAG TIRAN TOKYO VIDEL VIENN VIMIS WASHI
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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 10

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SUBJECT: BASRA VALEDICTORY: PART 2 OF 2

11. That progress has occurred since the end of the conflict is evident to anyone who can make comparisons on the ground; and it is confirmed by leaders in Basra such as the Governor, the Christian bishop and even the SCIRI representative on the Basra Interim Council. What used to be a two hour journey to al Amarah, last week took me three hours, because of traffic jams. Money is pouring into the economy, largely from the US Treasury. Perhaps \$1bn a month is now being earned from oil exports. Infrastructural projects are proceeding apace. A significant number of Iraqis are receiving salaries or stipends whether or not they actually have a job.

12. But, as is the nature of big infrastructural projects, there is a long lead time, involving planning, tendering, contracting and procurement, before the cash flow into the economy really starts to rise and jobs are created. The work plan was originally conceived with the expectation that the CPA would stay in being

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until late 2005. Meanwhile, as Bremer told us earlier this month, the cost of food and oil-related subsidies alone amounts to over \$10bn a year. At present we are still in the foothills: the steep climb of economic benefit is still ahead. And the climb could be interrupted by political obstacles.

13. The political wrestling is largely being conducted in Baghdad, London and Washington. We in the Provinces, remote from the Governing Council and its appointed ministers, can only facilitate political debate, observe, and report that the complexities of the caucus process for indirect elections has found no favour. A massive and entirely peaceful demonstration in Basra in mid-January in support of Ayatollah Sistani's call for early elections, while not necessarily any more indicative of popular opinion than the Countryside March, must nonetheless be taken seriously as an expression of will and, implicitly, as a threat. It was followed by a similar demonstration in Baghdad. As occurred during German Unification, events may come to be played out on the streets.

14. The challenges remain enormous. Some movement must be made towards Sistani while avoiding wholesale erosion of the CPA/GC position and a political vacuum. After 30 June, when the CPA is due to dissolve, there will be great economic bills to be met because politically sensitive economic decisions have had to be deferred in the interests of maintaining stability within the shortened timescale: an elected successor to the Occupying Powers will find such decisions even harder. And imaginative arrangements will be needed to allow the Coalition to maintain security without arousing protests against violations of sovereignty.

15. I believe, however, that the balance of probability is positive. In the South, at least, there has been progress on each of the Prime Minister's priorities and it is hard to recall just how bleak things looked last summer. This has in part been because the Shia's hatred of Saddam has helped maintain a relatively permissive security environment. And the British Armed Forces have gone well beyond purely military tasks, to great effect. There is a real appreciation of the Coalition's and the Military's efforts. Because CPA(S) now has a solid body of civilian expertise, which is still fortuitously expanding as a delayed consequence of decisions taken four months ago, it should be of increasing value in capacity-building both before and after 30 June. But the most important factor, and the source of most of my optimism, lies with the Iraqi people. They include excellent managers who respond to help and advice. They have suffered a lot. They do not want to see anarchy and chaos. And the Iraqi Shia are not the potential religious extremists that some commentators like to imply. The result will fall short of the ideologically-based initial US benchmarks; and it will be untidy. But it may yet prove more democratic than the government of any other Arab country.

16. The present combination of challenge, risk and discomfort has been unique in my diplomatic and naval careers. I look forward to

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my second attempt at joining the private sector, earlier than is required of me. But, looking back, the experience in Southern Iraq has been uniquely rewarding. I feel privileged to have been asked to play a part in an endeavour which no-one can doubt is worthwhile. I thank all those who have helped and, especially, those who have been my companions in Basra.

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