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Dear Margaret

Thank you for your letter of 7 June in which you asked me to check whether the Ministry of Defence could provide the Inquiry with better data for civilians deployed in Iraq between 2003 and 2009.

We do appreciate the importance of this aspect of the Inquiry's remit, and, as you have acknowledged, officials have spent many hours in researching the problem and trying to provide the data in the format that the Inquiry requires. We have interrogated all relevant data held by the Pay, Pensions and Personnel Agency, and where this has proved inconclusive we have supplemented it by scrutinising hundreds of spreadsheets provided by the Permanent Joint Headquarters. I understand that the figures we have provided are not fully consistent with figures contained in documentation originating with one of my predecessors, but we have not been able to find an audit trail for those figures to establish whether we are comparing like with like.

I am afraid, therefore, that I do not see any prospect of our being able to provide you with figures which we can guarantee to be comprehensive. I am at least assured that systems now in place would enable us to provide the current data for Afghanistan without difficulty.

I am copying this letter to Simon Fraser, Mark Lowcock, and
Office Iraq Inquiry Unit)

(Cabinet

Yours sincerely

Jon Thompson

Margaret Aldred
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