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From: Peter Millett, SSU
Date: 25 June 2004
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IRAQ SECURITY

22 June 04

1. I attach a copy of the report by the two OSAs () who visited Baghdad and Basra last week. The report covers a lot of detail and makes a number of recommendations to enhance security. The key points are:

- The threat is higher than on their previous 5 visits. Both the nature and extent of attacks has changed. The terrorists have become more professional in and both their tactics and expertise. The trend is, as ever, difficult to predict. We have to plan on the basis that it will get worse.
- Static security is good: staff work and live on secure zones where we can be confident that we have put in place a reasonable set of measures to protect our staff. The arrangements for Army protection in Basra are satisfactory. We can manage the risk within these secure zones, but they are not watertight.

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- Transport security continues to be the main problem. The armoured vehicles we have provided have now become a target in their own right. We have already lost two people in an attack on an armoured car. The fleet is mostly 4x4 vehicles, but there are many different types; we will continue to vary any future orders. The provision of electronic countermeasures to try to prevent remote controlled devices is in hand. The OSAs have recommended some more powerful weaponry for the armed protection teams. But procedures are as important as measures: the restriction on movements will continue to be essential to avoid exposing staff to unnecessary risks.

2. **We have now reached the limit of what we can do to protect staff in Iraq.** Indeed, the provision of more powerful weaponry means that we are coming uncomfortably close to being on a war footing. Our commercial contractor, CRG has expressed concern on this point but is satisfied that the company's role as a security force (rather than as a private army) remains intact. But if the numbers of attacks increase further, we have nowhere else to go.

3. It is therefore essential that we continue to bear down on the numbers of staff being exposed to this threat. Iraq Directorate have used the transition to reduce numbers and hold back new arrivals. We must ensure that the numbers of staff are kept as low as possible consistent with achieving our strategic objectives in Iraq. We also have to ensure that we keep the contingency plan up-to-date for evacuation by the US and/or UK military.

4. We will brief Edward Chaplin later today. and will go back to Iraq in mid-July to look at the new offices once they are opened.

Peter Millett

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The second line of paragraph two may not be clearly readable. It reads:
"... Iraq [in bold]. Indeed, the provision of more powerful weaponry means that we are coming..."

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