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Note from the Inquiry: this document distributed on 11 October was presented to the 4th 2005 meeting of DOP(I) on 12 October 2005.

IRAQ: SECURITY UPDATE

Security

1. The general level of activity among the insurgency remains broadly unchanged across Iraq, with MNF-I efforts focussing on setting the security conditions for the referendum. In Tal Afar, the current situation is relatively stable. Meanwhile, operations in the Euphrates valley, aimed at creating a safer environment for voters in the run up to the referendum and disrupting insurgency movement towards Baghdad have intensified in recent days. **We need to do more to press the Iraqi government to deliver on its promises to provide compensation and humanitarian aid in the aftermath of such counter-insurgency operations.**
2. In the south, despite an increase in the number of lethal attacks on the Coalition by a few extremist groups, and the incident in Basra on 19th September, the overall security situation has remained calm in comparison to other parts of the country. The position, however, is fragile with the militias able to promote unrest when they choose. **We will continue to take action to disrupt those who attack us: on Friday 12 individuals, who we believe to be implicated in attacks against UK forces, were arrested (although three have subsequently been released).**
3. Shia political factions and their militias, including some violent extremists, exert strong influence over Iraqi society, local authorities and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Many members of the security forces, particularly the police (IPS), have multiple loyalties. Under pressure their reliability will be doubtful. **We need to press the Iraqi government to reduce (and eventually remove) the influence of the militias and promote norms of integrity and probity among provincial officials.** Realistically, however, this is unlikely to change before elections in December.
4. Last week two separate attacks against US convoys killed four US soldiers near Basra, and a Danish soldier was killed by a roadside bomb. A British convoy also had what seems like a lucky escape when a roadside bomb

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exploded 15 metres ahead of the lead vehicle. All four attacks appear to have used passive infra-red initiated explosively formed projectiles. Deployment of counter-measures against this type of threat has started. I **will update the Committee on progress.**

5. Despite a lack of an Iraqi lead from Baghdad, MND(SE) have continued to build bridges with the local authorities post the Basra incident. Outside Basra city, Security Sector Reform (SSR) work has continued with little interruption, including joint patrolling. In Basra itself, our soldiers are again visiting IPS stations and we are able to talk in private to the Chief of Police. A joint statement on the 19 September incident has now been agreed. **Our aim is to re-build contact with the provincial authorities and to continue to push in Baghdad, where possible, for the replacement of incompetent provincial authorities.**

Transition Planning

6. The Red Team report has not yet been scrutinised in any detail in Washington nor is it being implemented fully in theatre. Whilst the report is accurate in its analysis, it defines a strategic approach that could only have been successful if it had been adopted at the outset of military operations; it is not consistent with either existing MNF strategy, or the scale of economic and military investment.
7. It seems likely, however, that some elements in the plan (e.g. boosting Ministry capacity and greater co-ordination of military and non-military activity) will be followed up rather than Red Team report being adopted wholesale. **We will need to work with the US on incorporating these elements into an authoritative plan which can be agreed with the Iraqi government.**
8. The Operational Plan on Transition in Southern Iraq was issued on 23 September by MOD. Implementation of the plan is dependent on the appropriate conditions for transition of security responsibility to the Iraqi

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civilian authorities. Transition will be synchronised with direction from the Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility, whose report is yet to be cleared by PM Ja'afari. **We expect the provinces in MND(SE) to undergo an assessment (by a team under auspices of the Joint Committee) of their suitability for transition later this month.**

9. Security Sector Reform (SSR) continues to be MNF-I's main effort with MND(SE) focusing on the 10th Division of the Iraqi Army (10 Div IA) and the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE), whilst playing a supporting role in the training and mentoring of the Iraqi Police Service (IPS). The ISF SSR plan is underpinned by infrastructure and equipment provision. Recent good news on MNF-I funding for vital barracks infrastructure projects in MND(SE) will ease the burden on UK funded projects. **We will continue to work with the Treasury to ensure outstanding vital equipment and infrastructure are properly funded.**
10. Progress on Iraqiisation continues. There are now 190,000 members of the Iraqi Security Forces trained and equipped (at the end of August, when I reported last to the Prime Minister, this figure was 175,000). In MND(SE), CHINDIT Camp (Basra) was recently handed over to the Iraqi Army and is the start of a gradual handover process. Six out of the ten battalions in 10 Div IA have been trained, one of the four remaining battalions is going through basic training now, the next two will follow later this year and early next year, with final one starting their training in March 2006. Of the 88 border forts in the MND(SE) area, 48 have now been handed to Iraqi control, this includes all those in Al Muthanna, with another 13 due to be handed over by the end of November 05 (see also paragraph 14).
11. SSR for the Iraqi Army continues to be on track for our transition plans despite the current IED threat making our work more difficult. **We may, nevertheless, need to arrange any necessary surge niche capabilities (air and protected mobility) and deploy the Cyprus based reserve battalion to coincide with key events eg. December elections.**

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12. On policing, the situation is less satisfactory. We need to do further work between MOD, FCO, DfID and the Home Office to improve support to IPS development at the strategic level eg. in the Ministry of Interior and in MND(SE) (see paragraph 15). Training is, however, only part of the issue. Problems of divided loyalties and militia links can only be dealt with by the political will of an effective Iraqi government (see paragraph 3).
13. The MOD already has a very full programme of high-level engagement in MND(SE), but we will look carefully at how , in the forthcoming months, we can arrange visits which will target those individuals who might be best placed to help restore the UK's position after the events of 19th September.

The Way Ahead and Handling

14. Successful Iraqiisation remains the key. Numerically progress in the Iraqi Army is good as is the performance of some units at the tactical level, but there continue to be significant weaknesses in command and control, logistics and MOD competence; all this is compounded by endemic corruption. We have a good set of objectives against which to measure progress for units in the field. **But we need to do more to generate similar metrics for the more complex issues associated with higher direction, command and control and logistics support so that progress next year can be measured and assessed.** I will arrange for **periodic updates to be provided** so that progress can be monitored. **The first of these will be provided by the end of November.**
15. We need to review our strategy on policing. Ministry of the Interior (MOI) forces, including the police, lag some 12 months behind the Iraqi Army. This needs to be tackled at two levels:
- In Baghdad, Multi-national Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC(I)), under US General Dempsey, is taking over responsibility from the US State Department for coalition mentoring and training of the Iraqi MOD and MOI. We have a

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UK presence in the MOD under a senior UK MOD official. There would be a **good case for providing a senior Home Official with the right experience to work with the MOI.**

- In MND(SE) arrangements are being made for **Sir Ronnie Flanagan to visit MND(SE) soon, to carry out an audit of the effectiveness of police training programme.** Part of this work might include an assessment of the Italians' programme in Dhi Qar province. **We should also encourage the Italians to do more in this area.** I will raise this during my visit to Rome on 24th October.

16. As requested I will institute regular (weekly or fortnightly) ad hoc Ministerial meetings to oversee Iraq security issues to which other government departments will be invited.

17. Nigel Sheinwald's letter to Peter Hayes raises the question of ministerial responsibilities for policing. **If DOP(I) decides that this should fall to MOD then it is imperative that the resource issue is resolved unequivocally.**

18. Links to the US. MOD needs a step change in the degree of its engagement with the US. **I will deliver a plan of engagement by ministers, military and senior officials for the next six months.** In particular we will focus on OSD, State and the NSC.

Overall Iraq Strategy

19. Our overall approach on Iraq across Government needs more coherence.
The following steps would help:

- A highlighting of our objectives for the end of 2005 and for the end of 2006, along with any milestones in between.

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- A definition of what would constitute success (preferably in measurable terms) in the political, military and social/reconstruction spheres.
- The establishment of an ad-hoc communications group chaired by a Minister to oversee our approach.

20. For convenience, action points have been summarised at Annex A.

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ANNEX A

Action Points

Press the Iraqi government to deliver on its promises to provide compensation and humanitarian aid in the aftermath of counter-insurgency operations like those in Tal Afar.

Continue to take action to disrupt those who attack us in MND(SE).

Press the Iraqi government to reduce and ultimately remove the influence of the militias and promoting norms of integrity and probity among provincial officials.

Rebuild contact with the MND(SE) provincial authorities and continue to push in Baghdad, where possible, for the replacement of incompetent provincial authorities.

Work with the US on incorporating those elements of the Red Team work which are to be implemented into an agreed authoritative and co-ordinated plan which can be agreed with the Iraqi government.

The provinces in MND(SE) will undergo an assessment (by a team under auspices of the Joint Committee) of their suitability for transition in October.

Ensure that outstanding vital equipment and infrastructure projects in MND(SE) are properly funded.

Deploy niche capabilities into MND(SE) as required.

Arrange visits to MND(SE) which will target those individuals who might be best placed to help restore the UK's position after the events of 19th September.

Generate metrics for measuring and assessing progress on ISF higher direction, command and control and logistics support.

Periodic updates on ISF effectiveness to be provided.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan to visit MND(SE) to carry out an audit of the effectiveness of police training programme.

Provide a senior Home Office official to work with the Iraqi MOI.

Encourage the Italians to do more on police training.

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Institute regular (weekly or fortnightly) ad hoc ministerial meetings in MoD to oversee Iraq security issues, to which other government departments will be invited.

Confirm responsibility for policing.

Set objectives for the end of 2005 and 2006 and define what constitutes success in the political, security and social/reconstruction areas.

Establish an ad-hoc communications group chaired by a Minister to oversee our approach in Iraq.

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