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www.pm.gov.uk

From the Private Secretary

27 November 2006

Dear Simon

IRAQ: FORWARD PLAN

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Thank you for sending across the draft Forward Plan on 24 November, drawing on work by the FCO, MOD and DFID. The Prime Minister read this over the weekend, and commented that it was an excellent piece of work. He asked for it to be sent – as work in progress – to the White House in advance of meetings there yesterday. We therefore sent a lightly edited version on Saturday.

I would be grateful if the Plan could now be finalised and implemented, bearing in mind a number of specific points:

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- this work, and the international community's commitment to Iraq, will require a high-profile launch. The paper notes the proposal in circulation for a UN-led international conference on Iraq, perhaps linked to the International Compact. The Prime Minister believes that this is an idea which we should pursue with the US and others;
 - the 'Peace Commission' proposed by the paper would be an essential element in ensuring oversight of the regional neighbours' contribution to Iraqi stability. This would provide a good opportunity to bring the UN into play;
 - the section on reforming key Ministries should be more detailed. Each Ministry will need a plan for capacity building, and there could be a role for designated external partners to each Ministry;
 - as we have seen in the past, personalities are a key part of ensuring that Ministries function effectively. We will need to keep a close eye on any prospective reshuffle;

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- we will need a strategic communications element to this work. No 10 Press Office will be in touch separately.

I am copying this letter to Margaret Aldred and Tim Dowse (Cabinet Office), John Sawers and Irian Siddiq (FCO), Admiral Charles Style and Martin Howard (MOD), Howard Taylor and Martin Dinham (DFID), Sir David Manning (Washington), and Dominic Asquith (Baghdad).

Yours ever



NICK BANNER

Simon McDonald CMG
FCO

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