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16 February 2007

Nick

THE EFFECTS OF OP SINBAD 20 SEPTEMBER 2006 TO 14 JANUARY 2007

In preparing material for the statement on Iraq the Prime Minister may wish to draw on the attached assessment of the effects of Operation SINBAD in Basra City. It sets the context for our re-posturing plans and highlights a number of areas where real progress has been made.

Summary: The quick impact projects, short-term employment, and the demolition of the iconic Jameat police building has improved consent levels and provided an opportunity to make progress towards PIC. A great deal remains to be done in the governance, security and economic areas but we have established we can make demonstrable progress given the right levels of Iraqi political support.

1. The OP SINBAD mission was threefold: to establish a secure environment in Basra; to defeat the death squads/militant militia; and, to reduce sectarian violence. Emphasis was placed on reconstruction, job creation and re-development of city areas.
2. \$77M has been spent on projects resulting in 25,000 short-term jobs being created. The level of consent among the ordinary Basrawi people has increased and we have made some tangible information Operation (IO) gains. The operation has also produced modest progress in ISF capability with the Iraqi Army taking responsibility for the later parts of SINBAD and has been useful in highlighting areas where work remains to be done in order to achieve Provincial Iraqi Control in Basra.
3. The death squads and militant militia have not been defeated and are still at large but we made a significant move against JAM through the operation to clear out the Serious Crimes Unit 10 Division are still to be properly tested

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against Jaish Al' Mahdi and other groups - party because they were not seriously challenged during the later stages OP SINBAD where they conducted independent tasks. The operation also highlighted that senior leadership in both the Police Service (corrupt) and the Iraqi Army (weak) remains flawed. As a result our re-posturing will address the need for increased training of the ISF

4. Further pulses in rural areas of Basra province have started in the post-SINBAD period. It is too early to assess their effect.

5. OP SINBAD has shown how much effort needs to be made to make a tangible difference in Basra. This effort needs to be sustained to PIC and beyond if we are to have a positive legacy in the South. Much depends on others and in particular the political will from central Government to help the provinces.

I am copying this letter to Sir Nigel Sheinwald, other ISG colleagues, HMA Baghdad, SBMRI, CG Basra and GOC MND(SE).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nick Beadle', with a large loop at the top and a horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Nick Beadle

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THE EFFECT OF OPERATION SINBAD

Background

1. This paper provides an assessment of the effect of Op SINBAD and is based on the phases of the operation covering the 16 districts of Basra City that took place between 20 September 2006 and 14 January 2007. Each district was tackled sequentially with a 48 hour security 'pulse' when the Iraqi Army and coalition forces combined to provide a security perimeter in order to enter local Police Stations, train the Baswari Police Service and carry out Immediate Impact Projects. This was followed by a 30 day 'pause' where Iraqi-led reconstruction projects were conducted.

Op SINBAD History

2. To combat the deteriorating security situation in Basra in early summer 2006 MND(SE) proposed the operation, Op SALAMANCA, to Basra's Provincial Authority. This focussed heavily on kinetic operations aimed at detaining and deterring the militant militia and death squads that were operating in the city. Op SALAMANCA, however, was rejected by the Iraqi Authorities and, following negotiations, a revised plan, Op SINBAD, focusing more on ISF training reconstruction, job creation and re-development of city areas was agreed.

3. The Op SINBAD mission was to establish a secure environment in Basra in order to set the conditions for transition to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC), and thereafter, Iraqi self reliance.

Areas of progress

4. Op SINBAD has brought improvements to Basra in a number of areas including:

5. **Permanent Joint Co-ordination Centre (PJCC).** A key criterion for PIC is the ability of the ISF to co-ordinate operations and responses across the Province. This has been clearly demonstrated through the success of the Permanent Joint Co-ordination Centre (PJCC) in improving in the ISF's ability to plan and coordinate operations in the city has enabled Iraqi Security Force (ISF) commanders to take genuine ownership of the pulses in the latter half of SINBAD. Given its central importance PJCC mentoring will continue beyond SINBAD and PIC.

6. **Crime Figures.** A number of metrics point to a general improvement in the serious crime levels in Basra since the inception of SINBAD (although a direct link is difficult to prove). Murder rates are down from a high of 139 in June 2006 to 29 in December, although this may include a degree of seasonal fluctuation. Improvements have been seen in other areas: for example kidnappings are down from 46 in August to 23 in November 2006 and from a rule of law perspective, 78% of criminal cases are now completed in investigative courts.

7. **Iraqi Police Service (IPS).** Basic police capability has improved although problems remain, particularly on leadership and corruption. The IPS has recently achieved the level required for transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). We are also

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making headway on corruption. The Serious Crimes Unit (SCU) has been disrupted, and arrest warrants have been issued to ensure that its corrupt members do not regroup; although this is dependent on the willingness of the Ministry of Interior/Local Police to action these warrants against politically sensitive targets. The new Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) based at Basra Air Station has been established from scratch and staffed with 40 vetted Iraqi police officers. It is now investigating eleven IPS corruption cases, with FCO-funded police and legal support, including follow-up to the Jameat operation.

8. **Iraqi Army (IA)** 10 IA Division is already at the level required to achieve PIC and has begun to demonstrate its operational capability through SINBAD. Although doubts remain about the Division's ability independently to plan and conduct security operations, at a low level the IA has led on SINBAD security pulses since December 2006, and conducted the later security pulses without overt coalition support. This in part fulfils a key PIC transition criterion of an IA capability to lead on counter-insurgency operations, but their ability to stand up to militias unaided by coalition remains questionable.

9. **Strike Operations.** Before SINBAD there was no appetite in the Provincial Council for the coalition to conduct Strike Ops as characterised by their watering down of the initial plan for Op SALAMANCA to which they were vehemently opposed. What has become apparent is that despite wider reservations, the destruction of the Jameat was, on the whole, welcomed by local people. High tempo precision strike operations, independent of SINBAD, anecdotally seem to be winning the approval of many Baswaris. It is possible that this is a second order consequence of the successes of Op SINBAD and the effect that its positive 'brand' is having.

10. **Economy.** The economic line of operation for Op SINBAD has delivered:

- 24,478 short term jobs created.
- 212 km of new water pipe laid.
- 70,000 Date Palm offshoots planted.
- 249 schools refurbished and basic supplies delivered.
- 30 football pitches built or improved.
- 20 Primary Health Care Centres have been refurbished or had equipment provided.

11. Overall during Op SINBAD, MND (SE) will have spent \$77m, and created short-term employment for 24,478 people. The principle of Immediate Impact Projects in order to win short term consent for operations, followed by Medium Term Projects over a longer period to build up enduring consent, has proved a good model. These have been underpinned by Long Term Projects, such as the date palm project, characterised as: low tech: high employment which is sustainable. Over time, the model has evolved, with increasing emphasis on more substantial Medium Term Projects designed to provide maximum employment and a more enduring

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reconstruction effect. Currently the following projects planned through to Summer 07:

- Water supply projects within pulse areas \$10m.
- Drainage Diversion \$2.5m
- Sewerage Pipe Installation \$5m
- Road Re-paving project \$5m
- Electricity Last Mile Project \$22.5m
- Canal Clearance \$46m
- Date Palm Programme Stage 2 \$20m

12. **Perceptions of local Baswaris.** Polling data can be useful in indicating trends in the perceptions of local Baswaris. The information below was collected in December 2006 based on a sample of 400 to 500 randomly selected people within Basra city. Polling data needs to be interpreted with caution; in particular it is difficult to assign positive or negative trends to the effects of Op SINBAD. Key indicators include:

- 92% of people feel secure in their own neighbourhood (up from 73% in September when Op SINBAD commenced).
- 67% of Baswaris believe the IPS are capable and professional (up from 49% in July 06).
- However, in a separate poll of 1000 Baswaris conducted in December 06, only 34% stated that they had heard of Op SINBAD and only a further 7% admitted they had heard of the operation when prompted.
- Only 5% of those polled in the same survey believed that Op SINBAD was a coalition operation and over half of those questioned did not know who was carrying out the operation.

Areas to be addressed

13. As a result of Iraqi concerns, Op SINBAD focussed the majority of its effort on reconstruction rather than directly addressing the death squads and militant militias operating in Basra. As a result, there are certain areas that require further work. These include:

- Iraqi Police Service. The Basra Police continue to suffer from weak leadership and command and control structures and serious corruption, largely due to infiltration by militia groups (we estimate that up to 75% of Basra IPS are members of a militia, and many are linked to criminal activity). We plan to increase police advisory capacity at the Warren site in order to stand up a Basra

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Crimes Unit (replacing the SCU) and train police leaders in command and control skills at Basra Air Station, in order to build leadership and specialist capacity. Willingness to arrest SCU members will be a good test of the Provincial Director of Police: the present incumbent is unlikely to rise to the challenge, which is one of the reasons for seeking an early replacement. UK civilian police support to the DIA will be maintained, and legal support to those prosecuting cases doubled, in order to ensure that the first high-profile police corruption prosecutions are made before PIC.

- Economic results have not been decisive. Many of the economic problems in Southern Iraq stem from the lack of both national and provincial executive capacity to prioritise and spend resources. Through short, medium and long-term employment, Op SINBAD has sought to provide opportunities; but the Provincial Council need to start leading and delivering projects for decisive and sustained economic effect to be felt. The DFID governance team have helped local Baswari Officials develop strategies which Baghdad has recently agreed and the Government of Iraq has provided \$172m to fund local projects. To date the Provincial Council have launched more than 305 projects that will eventually generate more than 1.5m days of work.
- Iraqi Army. The recent operation against the Jameat confirmed suspicions that some Iraqi Army leaders, , are not fit for task and more training of 10 Division leadership is required: there are plans to replace the GOC of 10 Division. More widely, we are conducting a number of training packages at Brigade level for 10 Division. In addition, we plan to open a Leadership Academy at Basra Air Station and a Divisional Training Centre at Shiabah Logistics Base. Concerns have also been raised regarding 10 Division's willingness to deploy outside southern Iraq. These concerns are being addressed through our plans for further training and the use of embedded Military Transition Teams. We have prepared elements of 10 Division for operations in the north in support of the Baghdad Security Plan. Their performance when deployed will be a crucial factor in determining whether this transition criterion is met.

Conclusion

14. Op SINBAD's aspirations were modest – to improve the security situation in Basra and prepare the way for transition to PIC, not act as a panacea for Basra's ills. The operation has in the first instance, and quite crucially, created a clearer picture of the problem facing both the coalition, and Iraqis, in Basra. Against the coalition transitional assessment criteria, it is fair to say that there are more positive than negative movements against the metrics for achievement of PIC. Quite rightly, GOC MND(SE)'s assessment is that Op SINBAD has produced promising, but not startling results, and will contribute to providing conditions that are 'good enough' for transition to PIC. If a single theme were to be highlighted, it would be that Op SINBAD has probably contributed to the perception in the mind of the average Baswari that the situation is getting better, however key areas, namely IDF and Militant JAM attacks against the coalition and inherent criminal activity within the IPS need to be addressed, prior to PIC.

DFID and FCO Officials have contributed material to this assessment.

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