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NOTE

I thought it might help to let you have some further thoughts on Iraq. I asked my people out there to do a comprehensive set of papers in each area -- from Sunni outreach to reconstruction to police etc -- so that I could get a clear picture.

The good news is that the problem we face is not multi-faceted. It is simple: security. The bad news is that I am not sure we yet have a fully-worked out strategy to tackle it. But we can get one.

Essentially what is happening is this. The place is awash with weapons. The borders are porous. The culture is violent. What the FRE and assorted terrorists are doing has a strategy behind it: it is to inhibit any progress -- killing construction workers, sabotaging improvements, creating an air of menace and chaos; and then provoking the CF to retaliate, using publicity to generate anger about the retaliation. Security therefore is the shadow over everything. The oil refineries can't be repaired so production may fall; the infrastructure work halts; the aid workers withdraw; the students stay away from school; the police take fright; the political system becomes warped and politicians in Iraq think they have to be anti-coalition in order to win support.

Underneath all this, however, is one reassuring truth: Iraqis ultimately want what we want: a stable Iraq in which the CF leave. But we are dealing with a people unused to proper political debate, without proper leadership and in conflict about their country's occupation. The Afghans felt their country was occupied for decades; the Taleban was felt to be an occupying force. The Iraqis are different.

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The strategy therefore has to:

- (a) Iraqiise the solution;
- (b) be as much about 'hearts and minds' as weapons; and
- (c) whilst not departing from (a) and (b) remind everyone we will stay, in overwhelming force, until the job's done.

This is, in essence, what the CPA is now embarked upon. But we need to improve it in the following ways:

- (1) Do whatever it takes to get the Civil Defence and police in shape. The Coalition should hire who we need; pay what it takes; create an officer class that can lead and knows that it has a huge vested interest in success. Bremer's speech on de-baathification etc was well received. But I'm not sure we really have our entire system focused on this; and it needs to be. Every main road has to be guarded; the oil refineries have to be rebuilt, to hit the 3m barrels per day target; the power has to reach the 6000 MW goal etc etc. This is worth mobilizing the entire energies of our coalition. "Doing our best" will not be enough.

- (2) Fifty per cent of the population has access to satellite TV. The Iraqi station is now up and running. But its reporters are in fear of their lives, whereas Al Jazeera were in Fallujah before the insurrection

Day in day out there is a huge wave of propaganda hitting us (eg the bombs in Basra were at first attributed to British missiles until we got local leaders out telling it as it is). At the least we need: to provide top security for al-Iraqiya reporters and staff; to ensure that al-Iraqiya has top quality entertainment and sports programmes to attract viewers; to strengthen

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the coalition's Arabic media capability (CJTF-7 has no Arabic spokesman); to get far better co-ordination between military and political to give real time information to our spokesmen; to get a vast uplift in the Iraqi Government's capability to communicate (very few Ministers have any real communication plan).

There needs to be a massive, concerted campaign in Iraq and abroad to explain who and what is the security problem and how it is a deliberate attempt to prevent Iraqi people getting the benefit of what we are doing. Eg every time terrorists stop work at a hospital or blow up repairs to electricity, the Government should be out there, explaining and campaigning.

I would like to send a couple of people I really trust to give us a proper sense of what could be done.

- (3) The real story of the reconstruction work is the difference between spending that is "obligated" and spending actually happening. Of course security is the central issue. But again, it needs a "whatever it takes" attitude to get this out and done and any suspension of major projects (eg Baghdad sewage and power stations) needs to be temporary. We also desperately need agreement on what will replace CPA outside Baghdad after 30th June.
- (4) The courts: very few cases can be tried at present; judges are subject to real intimidation. We need to ensure that trials of criminals and sentencing begins again. An independent judiciary will be a big step forward.

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- (5) On the political side, just one word of caution on Brahimi's plan. To exclude the present IGC altogether seems rather odd to me. We will need some of these on side, otherwise they will sabotage the new bodies. We should include those IGC members who want to be in the new political bodies.
- (6) We need urgently to sort out the exact MNF and Iraqi Forces relationship for after 30th June.

In conclusion, there is no doubt we can get there. But I just think in some of these areas, especially the first three, we need to satisfy ourselves that literally everything possible is being done to succeed. This is a race against time.

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