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NOTE

Here are the things I think we need to work on urgently. Perhaps we could discuss soon.

(1) Iraq: Sunni Outreach

The issue is: how to make the December elections a success; and create a new set of political circumstances for Iraq. The key to that is Sunni participation. The problem is: we have an ITG that isn't really dedicated to it; moderate Sunnis under intense assault; and as we lock up insurgents, detaining thousands of people, we risk alienating the people we need to win over.

This is the classic dilemma facing Governments acting against terrorists. To stop the terror we take tough action; the tough action necessarily means rough justice; the rough justice alienates and thus boosts terror; the tough action gets tougher and so on. Of course that is precisely the strategy of terror.

I don't doubt our forces are doing an extraordinary job. But the pool from which terrorists/insurgents can draw plus the utter indifference to the loss of innocent lives exhibited by the terrorists mean we can only staunch the flow. We can't, by security alone, heal the wound.

But there is one counter to this. The bizarre thing about many of the Sunni insurgents is that what they want, we want, ie Sunni representation in the government plus a withdrawal of the MNF. In fact, our political/military weight is the one thing that prevents a religious Shia domination.

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However, the propaganda pushed at the Sunnis the whole time is that we want to occupy their country.

My point is simple: we will have to take over the Sunni outreach or at least the strategy behind it.

The components are:

- (1) some release of detainees, perhaps under the parole of local community leaders; but this issue is causing real grievance amongst ordinary Sunnis;
- (2) a provincial list system for the December elections; it is controversial but do-able.
- (3) a vigorous ITG outreach led by Jaafari;
- (4) a transparent, rules-based de-Baathification process;
- (5) US/UK contacts with insurgents, eg have been talking to senior Sunnis close to the insurgency This can allow local ceasefires and managing Iraqi sensitivities;
- (6) reconstruction, where Sunnis complain they have had insufficient help; obviously it would have to be tied to verifiable ceasefires and security;
- (7) we are not making sufficient use of friendly neighbouring states. Their attitude is changing. They are now terrified of a Shia extremist state emerging. So they will help and they have good Sunni contacts. The

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August conference in Jordan is a case in point. I propose we have an informal contact group: US/UK; Jordan; Egypt; Turkey; UAE; Saudi. This group would target Sunnis who might co-operate and help, discreetly the moderate cause in general and Allawi in particular.

2. Iraq: Security Transition

Our problem, all the way through, has been: if we look as if we're wanting to go, that undermines our resolve; if we look as if we're wanting to stay, that undermines our political strategy to help Iraq to stand on its own feet as a democracy.

So: one week the stories are: we're about to quit, the next, we're staying for ever.

It may be impossible to escape this. But we do need a proper transition plan, led by the Iraqis, with which we are happy that sets out, before the December elections, how we intend to proceed.

This should be communicable in stages: ie with a roll-out of handovers in certain parts of the country; a proper media strategy, in Iraq and here to do it.

3. Iraq: Organisation

I have little faith in the present ITG. The elections have to produce something tougher, better and more credible. Now Khalilzad is there, we can ramp up effective political engagement. But we urgently need this plus the contact group I describe. We should get a regular report from Patey, the UK rep and Khalilzad specifically on the political outreach.

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We also need to influence the next Government's composition – quietly but nonetheless effectively. It must be capable. That is the bottom line. I don't even rule out working with Chalabi. The problems with him are obvious. But so is the talent.

4. Iran and Syria

We need to move to very tough positions on both. Syria are allowing jihadists to cross their border, Iran are actively supporting militia groups. My worry is that if Iran sees a moderate Shia government emerging post-December, they will start up a campaign in the south. They must be in no doubt that, despite all the problems in Iraq, we are prepared to act against them if they interfere in a malign way.

5. The Islamic World

The Islamic world is stirring. Not fast or far enough but noticeably. It is now very plain that without Islam confronting its own demons and without better and closer co-operation between Islam and the West, we are going to fight an uphill battle, however good our security measures. I have spoken at length to King Abdullah. He held a successful conference on Islam on 4-6 July in Amman. But it didn't attract a lot of publicity. However it did clearly lay down a series of principles for legitimate Islam which if established would be very helpful, ie it seems to establish a clear and unified religious authority for Islam.

He and I have thought about the following gameplan:

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(i) He and his people can get the Imams who were at the July Conference and all of whom in some way are the mentors for Islamic clerics in our own countries, to ask Western countries to establish in each of our countries, an Islamic Council, made up of senior clerics who would pronounce solely on religious issues and would be the sole source of fatwas. So eg we would have a British Islamic Council of Britain's senior clerics. They would be the authority on religious issues. They would not get into politics. They would then also be responsible for licensing clerics. Abdullah had the idea of having also a pan-European Council. It would be up to the US or Russia etc whether they wanted to do this too. It may be unnecessary in your case.

But his thinking is we need to link mainstream Arab Islam with mainstream Western Islam and I think he's right. Incidentally around the UN summit in September he is due to address 40,000 Muslims in Chicago. It could be a good showcase since these, apparently, are sensible people and it shows that in the U.S., Muslims are free to worship.

(ii) following from this, we need a western/Islam conference which brings us together politically. We could use, eg the Indonesia meeting at the UN in September; the Euromed conference in November; or the G8/Middle East forum as rallying points.

(iii) there would then be the OIC in December. Just before that is apparently a big religious meeting at which, hopefully, the Jordan conclusions of 4-6 July will be endorsed. That will mean over 30 Islamic countries signed up to it.

(iv) then next year there could be a big coming together of West/Islam at a religious and political level.

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All of this would counter the ideas of these people, destroy their legitimacy, and give a good pretext for tough measures against them both here and in Islamic countries.

(6) The battle of ideas

The new unit with Karen etc is excellent. We should work closely with you. This battle increasingly reminds me of fighting revolutionary communism. Ultimately victory lies in the triumph of ideas. But we need to push this at every level: in media, in culture, in mass communication. There should be no place these people aren't challenged and taken on.

TB

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