

DECLASSIFIED



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 November 2003

Dear Geoffrey,

### IRAQ: NEXT STEPS

Nigel Sheinwald has reported back to the Prime Minister on his visit to Iraq with Rob Fry and Nick Cannon last week, and the Prime Minister has taken the following decisions on next steps on Iraq.

On the **political process**, the Prime Minister is concerned, for reasons of legitimacy, that elections should not be postponed beyond the end of next year unless absolutely necessary. They should be held as soon as possible. If elections are not possible next year, then we shall need some other method of providing legitimacy in the course of next year. He accepts that we are unlikely by Spring 2004 to have made the advances necessary, particularly on security, for a wholesale transfer of power to a provisional government.

So the Prime Minister welcomes the direction the debate on the constitutional timetable is now taking. He would be comfortable with a timetable along the lines of that set out in Jeremy Greenstock's 10 November teletext, with elections in around September 2004 to an Assembly which would appoint a transitional government, with power and formal sovereignty then transferred from the CPA to this government.

The Prime Minister hopes that, in addition to Nigel's continuing discussions on this with Condi Rice, the Foreign Secretary and Jeremy Greenstock will take the debate forward during their visit to Washington later this week.

On the **media**, the Prime Minister remains very worried about the lack of a proper CPA grip. He would like the FCO/MOD to second a proper public affairs team to Iraq to help project to Iraqi and international media what is actually happening in Iraq, and manage what should be an increased programme of visits by Parliamentarians and journalists.

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL - PERSONAL~~  
**DECLASSIFIED**

- 2 -

The Prime Minister welcomes the continued progress being made in the **South**. Both the military and the CPA operations appear to be going extremely well. He hopes there will be continued close cooperation between the military and civilian CPA staff. He has also asked that the FCO should put in place a British Office in Basra to handle trade contacts, cultural ties, visitors etc.

I am copying this letter to Peter Watkins (MOD), Mark Bowman (HMT), Moazzam Malik (DfID), PS/C, John Scarlett and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office), Sir Jeremy Greenstock (Iraq Rep), Chris Segar (Baghdad), Sir Hilary Synnott (Basra), and Sir David Manning (Washington).

Yours,



**MATTHEW RYCROFT**

Geoffrey Adams  
FCO

**DECLASSIFIED**