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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service  
Sir Andrew Turnbull KCB CVO

03 December 2003

Dee Hayden

for  
Alice Perkins  
John Barker  
Jeremy Heywood

**IRAQ: CIVILIAN STAFFING**

As I said to colleagues on Wednesday, staff from many Departments and Agencies are making significant contributions on the ground in Iraq. Ministers greatly appreciate their courage, persistence and determination. Jack Straw underlined this at Cabinet after his visit to Iraq last week.

Ministers feel more should be done to recognise what our secondees in Iraq are achieving. Please encourage your Human Resources and Communications teams to address this, for example by generating reports for your house journals, sending messages of support and appreciation to secondees, and feeding stories to local newspapers and radio stations (as our military colleagues often do so well). Geoff Hoon has kindly offered MOD help with the latter, on which FCO officials will co-ordinate.

We should also ensure that the experience gained by secondees in Iraq is valued properly, and reflected in their appraisals and future career development. In many cases, secondees will have displayed or acquired skills which should be strong assets as they return to new jobs at home.

Many of you have been very helpful in releasing staff for work in Iraq. I hope you will continue to look sympathetically at further requests over the next few months – but always on the clear understanding that secondments in Iraq must be entirely voluntary, and that all volunteers will be fully briefed on the security situation.

I am copying this letter to Wednesday morning colleagues.

Your marks  
A.T.

Andrew Turnbull

Sir Hayden Phillips GCB  
Department for Constitutional Affairs

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