

IRAQ: SECURITY

The timetable for transfer of power to transitional government is challenging but can be done. Momentum is there. One thing which can throw this off course is security. Must be our highest priority from now until the handover. Current insurgency/terrorist campaign may not pose a traditional strategic threat. But mounting rates of attacks on coalition will

- sap domestic public and political support;
- wean away allies who have less of a stake in this than US/UK;
- risk withdrawal of civilian volunteer staff in the CPA and governorates;
- encourage the current insurgency to become a widespread, popular resistance.

So we need to address the following areas:

Military

- Where more muscular action is needed, it must be effective, focussed and proportionate, and supported by a proactive information campaign. We need to do more to tackle use of IEDs; mortar and rocket attacks; and SAMs. *We should seek to avoid further alienation of Sunni population.* Overall approach needs to provide reassurance.
- further action needed on border security to prevent infiltration and on arms/ammunition dumps. *These are still being left unguarded around the country.*

Intelligence

- Counter-insurgency operations are effective only when based on good, real time intelligence. We need much *better coordination of intelligence collection and analysis*. Intelligence sharing between the military and civilian Agencies must be improved. Agencies should liaise on staffing and resources, eg on the provision of Arabic speakers.
- growth of Iraqi intelligence capacity is vital. Now is the time to *accelerate the establishment of Iraqi intelligence capability* in the Ministry of the Interior. Our agencies are already working on this.
- information produced by the military-led interrogations is not easily available to the intelligence agencies. A proper *interrogation record keeping system* needs to be put in place. A team of interrogation experts needed on the ground urgently. And a system of continuous operational coordination on the use to which this intelligence should be put in place, overseen by a regular meeting of the top civilian and military CPA personnel.

Sunni strategy

- *Sunni outreach remains critical even while pursuing crackdown on FRE activities in these areas.* Civic and economic development projects must be a priority. And we must help the IGC to sell the new political process in the Sunni heartlands.

Civilian security

- *Real risk of serious US and UK civilian losses.* When civilian volunteers begin to be hit the consequences are different to those for the military. Resulting mass pull-outs will undermine our ability to ensure an effective handover of responsibility to Iraqis.
- CPA must address this with urgency. Accommodation of UK civilian staff in Baghdad is an immediate problem. We have identified an alternative (basement car park of the Convention Centre), but have yet to get agreement from US side.

The neighbours

- Some activities by eg Iran and Syria are unacceptable. *We need to focus on getting them to be more helpful over Iraq.* We plan to put some extra effort into this, using Sir J Greenstock. US and UK should liaise closely on joint strategy and tactics with neighbours.

Information operations/communications

- No coherent communications strategy or sufficiently strong press team yet in place. *Iraqis must also get the message repeatedly from other Iraqis.* We plan to send experts to Baghdad to help Gary Thatcher produce a strategy as soon as possible.

Iraqisation

- *must accept previously Baathist elements in the security forces,* provided not linked with former repression. *Militias – Peshmerga, Badr Corps – need to be brought in in an inclusive, transparent way, spread around in small units and under coalition command.* Plans for this should be drawn up immediately with IGC. And we must make more use of *tribes and religious leaders eg.* disbursing funds to them to use their people to protect installations, pipelines.

Economics

- *absolute priority must be given to job creation -* reopening factories and using available workforce for labour intensive reconstruction. Other Arab investors could help with this. Creating a vibrant and modern private sector will need to be left till after June, but will then be a priority for the Iraq/international community partnership.

Managing the transition/drawdown

- *Planning for withdrawal of 30,000 US troops by March needs to be re-assessed against the growing security threat.* We must have a secure overall environment in the period running up to the caucus elections. The enemy will exploit any gaps. *Better to lower domestic expectations now and link to positive progress on the political timetable.* Conditions on the ground and the views of the Governing Council/Transitional Assembly must inform the decision.
- On civilian side, *must not adopt mindset that June represents a cut off point.* Will have to stay engaged to assist the Iraqi transitional government find its feet. Need to start thinking now about how this should best done.

Coordination of policy

- We need to *tighten up high-level coordination between military, civil and intelligence elements, and between Coalition partners*. We see a need for a committee in Baghdad, chaired by Ambassador Bremer and bringing together US commanders, and key civilians (eg in charge of police), plus Greenstock and British opposite numbers. This could be backed up by a strategic review group which would meet in Washington, with senior level civilian, military and intelligence participation, again with British involvement. This would put us on the right footing through the difficult period until the transitional administration is up and running in the summer.