

NOTE

I met Jerry Bremer and others in Iraq. He is very impressive, got real grip and doing a great job. But the task is absolutely awesome and I'm not at all sure we're geared for it. This is worse than re-building a country from scratch.

○ We start from a really backward position. In time, it can be sorted. But time counts against us (a) because the Iraqis are impatient and don't yet see clear improvement, though plainly delighted at Saddam's departure; and (b) because if there is any vacuum, clerics/Iran/anyone bad, wants to fill it.

My sense is: we're going to get there but not quickly enough. And if it falls apart, everything falls apart in the region.

So my suggestions:

○ (1) on specifics;

- (i) security in Baghdad must be dealt with now, getting patrols out on foot, hunting down the Baathist groups. Police training is vital and urgent in Baghdad.
- (ii) Bechtel needs to move far more quickly in letting contracts for infrastructure reconstruction - patching up won't do.
- (iii) we need to put our Communications Strategy on a completely different and more energetic footing. Iraq TV needs to be taken over by a decent team putting on TV things people want

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to watch - local soaps, football etc. It sounds mundane but is vital. And coalition propaganda has to be better, tighter and more effective.

- (2) in general, JB needs administrative capacity. He is running a large country. He should be able to call on whatever he wants, whenever he wants it. He is bringing in people and someone good but he needs top people at every ministry, treasury, health, schools, the lot. There are still many bureaucratic obstacles to clearing it all. I think it needs us to have a regular report to us directly from people we trust, allowing us to clear these obstacles immediately. I propose a small joint team, with one of our people from our own circle who can help JB, who are a rapid conduit to us and who will keep us posted and give us a prod when and where needed.

But for the next bit of time, I'm going back to almost a war footing, to restore focus to this. As you rightly forecast, this part will be the hardest part.

Strangely, on the political side, the pitfalls are obvious and tough, but can be dealt with. It's the daily life issues that are the priority.

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