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From:

COBR

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**IRAQ: COBR ROUND UP OF KEY EVENTS – 9 April**

I enclose today's round-up.

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- Latvian Defence Minister announces two military units on standby for Iraq; details on size/nature/dates to follow next week.

### **International political developments**

- Kuwaiti de facto Foreign Minister tells media during visit to Paris yesterday that once security situation stabilised, coalition forces will be asked to leave Kuwait.
- Iran: Strong popular rumours of damage to Shia shrines in Iraq continue to stoke sentiment against US/UK.
- Indian Parliament passes a resolution 'deploring' military action in Iraq, amid calls from opposition parties for GoI to condemn the 'barbaric' US action. Pressure of GoI to take a stronger position against military action likely to ease as Parliament turns its attention to a role in post-conflict Iraq.
- GCC Foreign Ministers express solidarity with Kuwait, call for Iraqis to govern Iraqis and for a UN role.
- Greek government and opposition condemn the killing of two cameramen and journalist in Baghdad; blanket media coverage describes 'attack' as deliberate US forces' attempt at censorship. Greek EU Presidency circulates a draft OSCE Permanent Council Statement on media issues in Iraq for coordination of EU views. (FCO aiming to head this off on basis Iraq not an OSCE issue.)
- Jordan: Temperature rises a little with death of Jordanian journalist. Prince Hassan puts himself forward as a mediator. US military officer shot outside hotel yesterday – minor injuries.

### **Humanitarian**

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- **Law and order / looting**: ICRC have reported to DFID violent looting in Baghdad, and an almost complete breakdown of law and order in many areas; highlighted especially the looting of a psychiatric hospital, where individuals reportedly attacked and in some cases raped. An ICRC employee remains unaccounted for since his vehicle came under fire on Tuesday afternoon. ICRC say they are temporarily

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## IRAQ: EVENING ROUND UP 9 APRIL

### Military situation

- Crowds celebrate in Baghdad city centre as statue of Saddam pulled down with US assistance; US now have significant presence in the city. But the fight for Baghdad continues as the US steadily move to surround the city, and significant pockets of resistance remain, often fighting from domestic buildings.
- Resistance around Al Amarah may be less than expected.
- In Basra, successful meeting between Maj Gen Brims, Sheikh Muzzahim Al Tannini, and other tribal sheikhs; discussions to form a local representative committee will continue.
- Chalabi and perhaps c. 500 Free Iraq Fighters deployed by US in Talil airbase, being equipped and trained by US. US intentions unclear.
- As the campaign has developed, some UK maritime and air assets have fulfilled their role and are preparing to leave theatre in the next few days.
- Spanish 'SPS Galicia' arrived in Umm Qasr, but Spain has asked for no publicity for the moment.

### Post conflict planning

- Foreign Secretary briefs Villepin on Hillsborough. Villepin repeats that he recognises must be a period of 'security stabilisation' but that UN would be needed to legitimise reconstruction.
- Saudi Arabia: Prince Saud (Foreign Minister) reiterates the importance of putting Iraqis in control as soon as possible, but accepts coalition will have a crucial role in ensuring security; GCC role seen as being limited to humanitarian efforts.
- Chinese and Russian Vice-Foreign Ministers publicly agree principles for post-conflict Iraq (mainly, that the UN should have a leading role in reconstruction).
- Oman: General Ali Majid tells HMA Muscat that Omani forces would not be used outside the GCC.

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unable to pursue their emergency assistance in Baghdad, and have requested US help in protecting hospitals and ICRC warehouses.

- Also continued looting in Basra, Umm Qasr and elsewhere in the south; low-level, but some water plants in Basra have been rendered unserviceable as a result. UK forces working with local leaders/citizens to restore order.
- ICRC report the **broader humanitarian situation in Baghdad** is 'extremely critical'. Hospitals 'overwhelmed' by the influx of casualties. Some do not have mains water and power. Power to others being supplied by back up generators which are facing mechanical difficulties (been in constant use for three days). The water supply to the whole city is becoming an issue of 'major concern'.
- Humanitarian aid deliveries have begun in some areas of central Iraq under US control, including As Samawah and An Najaf.

#### **Middle East Peace Process**

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#### **Consular**

- Terry Lloyd's body currently planned to be repatriated 11 April.
- FCO investigating possibility of using 'Freedom Radio' to broadcast regular appeals for information on missing British and other nationals, especially missing colleagues of Terry Lloyd and missing 'Islamic Relief' workers.

#### **Public mood**

- Only 7 protests involving 250 protestors noted yesterday, mostly in Belfast. Community tension across the UK remains low.
- Reports, yet to be confirmed by police, that 20 people, possibly Iraqis, detained by police after a demonstration and break-in at former Iraqi Interests Section of Jordanian Embassy, London; intent/faction not yet known.

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- Anti-war rally planned for Central London this Sunday coincides with the London Marathon. Large numbers of protestors not expected, but the (deliberate) timing will make it difficult to assess the true level of support. No intelligence to suggest protestors intend to disrupt the marathon, but police preparing contingency plans.

#### **Oil markets**

- **Oil prices** have been relatively flat in the past two days and remain at around \$24.5/bbl. **UK retail** petrol and diesel prices fell slightly by 0.2 p/l last week. **Wholesale** diesel prices continued to fall but wholesale petrol prices rose as attention turns towards the US driving season in the summer. However retail margins remain healthy.

#### **Air travel**

- **BA** are planning to move the bulk of their operations back from Larnaca to the Gulf States. Dubai will be re-established as the crew slip point for UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman over the weekend. Flights to Kuwait remain suspended. Flights to Saudi will continue to operate via Larnaca.

Cabinet Office  
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