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SECRETARY OF STATE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5, ZONE D, MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone:
Fax:
E-mail:

MSU/4/5/2/ mw

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Dear Nick,

SBMR-I RECONCILIATION AND OUTREACH UPDATE

Following the Prime Minister's meeting with General Petraeus earlier this month, you asked for some details of SBMR-I's negotiations with Sunni insurgent groups and his outreach work with Sadrist and JAM affiliated bodies. Please find attached a short note to meet this requirement.

I should stress that the details of this work are very sensitive and none of the attached should be discussed with any Iraqi interlocutors. Similarly it has received very little exposure outside US military circles.

*Yours aye,
Rufus McNeil*

RUFUS MCNEIL
Private Secretary

Nick Banner Esq
10 Downing Street

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SBMR-I RECONCILIATION/OUTREACH SITREP

These negotiations are highly sensitive and should not be discussed other than on a strict need to know basis.

SUMMARY

Sunni

- There has been ongoing MNF-I effort since Summer 2006 to bring Sunni insurgent groups into a dialogue that may lead to a ceasefire with Coalition Forces (CF) / Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).
- SBMR-I has expanded this process and established substantive, but highly sensitive, joint negotiations with leadership elements of Ansar-al-Sunna, Jaysh al-Islami, Jaysh al-Mujahadeen and the Government of Iraq (GOI).
- The groups are currently negotiating amongst internal factions the possibility of forming a single organization, calling a ceasefire and working to defeat AQI.
- The development of confidence building test case (which may be expanded) within Baghdad/Anbar in return for economic development and employment is underway.

Shia

- A less advanced negotiation has commenced with the Mayor of Sadr City concerning. Whilst partially standalone, these developments are, wherever possible, being subsumed into the wider Baghdad Security Plan.
- Further opportunities with other Shia are now being explored.

BACKGROUND

1. Within an overall framework of bringing those groups and individuals who the GOI consider are potentially reconcilable into the political process, and whilst simultaneously attempting to neutralise those who are irreconcilable (e.g. AQ, IRGC Quds, and extreme criminal) by both kinetic and non-kinetic means, SBMR-I's aim has been to establish separate, meaningful dialogues with reconcilable leaders from both sides.

2. SBMR-I has established substantive dialogue with representatives from Sunni insurgent groups and tribal leaders from the Al Anbar / Abu Ghuraib areas, and less advanced dialogue with Shia (Sciri and JAM) representatives from Sadr City. In both cases the GOI has been represented at official level

3. On both sides, it has been agreed that, should any of the initiatives prove successful, then any Information Operations (IO) or media campaigns to support these issues is one that the various groups need to take forward themselves, on their own terms, and in their own time. To do anything else is likely to create serious difficulties and undermine the whole process.

SUNNI GROUPINGS

4. Negotiations with the Sunni Insurgent Leadership (Jaysh al Islami, Jaysh al Mujahadeen, and Ansar al-Sunna) are relatively advanced. SBMR-I has expanded these

. The negotiations have now reached the point where a test case, in the area of Abu Ghuraib (western edge of Baghdad), is actively being developed. This involves the combined insurgent grouping, supported by the GOI (and in conjunction with elements of the ISF), to provide local protection in the area. As part of developing confidence building measures, there is a wide ranging set of proposals including a comprehensive (Iraqi designed and Iraqi contracted) economic/social reconstruction package, coupled with release of some moderate, influential and compliant detainees. Within MNF-I the economic proposals are being given some weight, albeit not everyone knows why, and on a similar basis a gathering of local Abu Ghuraib business leaders has been undertaken.

5. MNF-I reporting indicates that there have been some moderate successes already by these groups in persuading other elements of their organizations to support a ceasefire with CF and ISF, and in operations against AQI. If successful such test cases may be expanded, not least as the groupings claim to be aiming to deliver a nationwide ceasefire. There are already reports of actions against AQI in Diyala. However, there is much left to accomplish, and the pendulum could easily swing the wrong way. Until such time as the internal rifts in the organisations are resolved, then progress will remain modest. Similarly, those insurgent leaders that are currently involved in this process represent only a handful, and their personal security is in great danger. The loss of any one of them at this stage could potentially set this process back about a year, and at a point where time is not on our side. There have already been some lapses of OPSEC that have put the process at considerable risk.

SHIA GROUPINGS

6. Negotiations with Shia/JAM representatives in Sadr City are less advanced and in many respects are made more complicated by the nature and sectarian makeup of Baghdad, and that JAM is made up of many disparate, competing parts, each requiring a different approach. The Baghdad Security Plan also presents both opportunities and additional significant challenges to the negotiations in Baghdad. The Mayor of Sadr City has made a number of demands which include the release of certain nefarious detainees and the

Cessation of raids into Sadr City. Less controversial demands include reconstruction and employment opportunity, including with the Police.

7. General Aboud (the Iraqi Baghdad commander) has been engaged in the process to ensure that there are consistencies within the BSP and such that it cannot be seen that any area of Baghdad is being treated differently due to any perceived (or otherwise) sectarian bias.

8. Other Shia/JAM leaders within Baghdad are also now coming forward to speak to the PM's office with similar demands to the Mayor. These are now starting to be explored. Each represents a genuine, albeit fleeting, opportunity to be exploited.

TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

9. Separately the US Marines (MNF-West) in Al Anbar are actively pursuing a tribal engagement strategy. It is a separate initiative that SBMR-I has some involvement in, but differs from the insurgent grouping negotiations.

10. Since late 2006, MNF-West have also been engaged with the "*Anbar Salvation Council (ASC)*" – a group of anti-AQI tribal leaders, based in Ramadi, led by Sheikh Sattar Abu Rishar who was given permission by PM Maliki to recruit three emergency response battalions of police consisting of local tribe members. This has been particularly effective and, within Ramadi, much public opinion has turned against AQI, the ASC has denied battlespace to AQI who have lost many of their former strongholds in the area; and police recruitment has increased significantly.