10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

26 April 2004

Dear Kara,

IRAQ: 15 REPORTS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister has read in full all 15 reports produced for him in response to Nigel Sheinwald's letter of 19 April, and additional Iraq updates. They were very good. He is grateful to all those who worked on them, particularly David Richmond, Dominic Asquith and their team in Baghdad.

The conclusion the Prime Minister draws from all these reports is that the problem we face is not multi-faceted. It is simple: security. It casts its shadow over everything from oil production to education to the political process. The Iraqis ultimately want what we want: a stable Iraq from which the Coalition forces leave. The essential elements of our security strategy have to be: make a reality of Iraqi-isation; focus on hearts and minds; and make clear that we will stay, in overwhelming force, until the job is done.

The Prime Minister thinks that we need to improve existing activity in the following ways:

(a) Iraqi-isation. We must do whatever it takes to get the ICDC and Iraqi police in shape. Every main road has to be guarded, oil refineries rebuilt, electricity generation on target. (Comment. Cabinet Office are coordinating an update in advance of the Prime Minister's conversation with President Bush on 27 April and a further note for this weekend's box.)

(b) Communications. There needs to be a concerted campaign in Iraq and abroad to explain what the security problem actually is, and how it is a deliberate attempt to prevent the Iraqi people from getting the benefit of what we are doing. We need provide top security for al-Iraqiya's reporters and staff; strengthen the coalition's Arabic media capability; improve the coordination between military and political to give real time

information to spokesmen; and vastly improve the Iraqi government's communications capability.

(c) <u>Reconstruction spending</u>. There is a damaging gap between "obligated" funds and actual spending. Any suspension of temporary projects must be temporary. We need urgent clarity and agreement on what will replace the CPA outside Baghdad after 30 June.

(d) <u>The courts</u>. We need to ensure that trials of criminals and sentencing begin again. Very few cases can be tried at present. Judges are subject to real intimidation. An independent judiciary will be a big step forward.

(e) <u>Political process</u>. We should not exclude IGC members altogether. Those who want to remain involved should be included in the new political structures.

(f) <u>Security agreement</u>. We need urgent agreement on the relationship between the MNF and the Iraqi authorities and Iraqi forces after 30 June.

The Prime Minister will need to be kept up to date, with some updates weekly, others fortnightly or monthly (the Cabinet Office have the details). For this weekend's box, the Prime Minister would be grateful for answers to the following detailed questions, as part of or in addition to the updates:

(a) How many civilians have been killed in Iraq, and how? The figure of 15,000 is out there as a fact – is it accurate?

(b) Are we confident that the security part of the transition plan for Southern Iraq (para 5 of the "UK transition plan for Southern Iraq") will work, with local control of Basra passed to the Iraqi police in the coming months, with the ICDC and MNF available in support?

(c) Is it a problem (para 18 of the same document) that the PMO has shared only briefly some of their reconstruction plans with the Iraqis?

(d) The Prime Minister's instinct is that gasoline price liberalisation should be phased not done all at once before 30 June. Grateful for an update on para 9 of Iraq Rep telno 183.

I am copying this letter to Moazzam Malik (DfID), Chris Baker (MOD), John Scarlett and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office), David Richmond and Dominic Asquith (Iraq Rep), Patrick Nixon (Basra), Sir David Manning (Washington) and Sir Emyr Jones Parry (UKMis New York).

Yours,

MATTHEW RYCROFT

Kara Owen
FCO