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DECLASSIFIED10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

S 154/04

From the Private Secretary

27 May 2004

Dear Chris,

IRAQ: UK MILITARY PRESENCE

The Prime Minister met the Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, International Development Secretary, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and CDS on 27 May. Jonathan Powell, Nigel Sheinwald, John Scarlett, Desmond Bowen and I were also present. This letter is sensitive and must be seen only by those with a real need to know.

The Prime Minister agreed with the general terms of the Defence Secretary's proposed statement to be made in the House of Commons later on 27 May on the reinforcement and re-roling of MND(SE) units (Mike Naworynsky's letters of 25 and 26 May to me).

There was a short discussion - but no decisions - on the options for a UK military contribution to the wider South (Mike Naworynsky's other letter of 25 May to me). The Prime Minister said that of course we must do what was necessary for the success of the overall mission in Iraq. These operational military judgements must take precedence over any political considerations.

It was agreed that the Ministers would meet again on 3 June for a fuller discussion.

CDS explained that some preparatory steps would be required before then, for instance discussion with industry and work on:
The Prime Minister agreed that these could begin.

The Prime Minister said that for the 3 June meeting he would like to see a full, detailed plan on Iraqi-isation of security forces. (Comment: MOD have this in hand, with other Government departments. This will be a very important piece of work.)

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I am copying this letter to Ciara Mulligan (ODPM), Mark Bowman (HMT), Carolyn Bartlett (Attorney General's Office), Geoffrey Adams (FCO), Moazzam Malik (DFID), PS/C, John Scarlett and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

Matthew

MATTHEW RYCROFT

Chris Baker
MOD

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