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Subject: URGENT Whitehall Correspondence. Reference Number:
GM/225/2003

HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

URGENT

Whitehall Correspondence

Reference Number: GM/225/2003

Letter From: Michael Jay

To: Suma Chakrabarti

Date of Letter: 11/11/2003

Subject: Security of UK Civilian Secondees In Iraq

Referred To: NIGEL HAMILTON on 13/11/2003

For Information Only

Action Taken:

Signed:

Date:

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Iraq file
14.11.03



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11 November 2003

Dear Suma,

SECURITY OF UK CIVILIAN SECONDEES IN IRAQ

The FCO is very grateful for your willingness to second staff to the Coalition Provisional Administration in Iraq. We now have some 130 civilians (including contracted consultants) in Iraq. This number is set to rise to around 200, with the arrival of police trainers, Governorate teams and additional staff for CPA (South) in Basra. This major contribution to the interim administration and reconstruction of Iraq is considerably larger than envisaged in the summer.

As I mentioned at the Wednesday morning meeting last week, we are considering – on a contingency basis – whether it would make sense to reduce the numbers of civilian staff if the security situation were to deteriorate; and, if so, which staff we should retain in those circumstances. I will report on the results of this exercise next week, but wanted to update you in the meantime on other recent developments.

A joint FCO/DfID security team visited Baghdad, Basra and one of the Governorates for a week last month. They made further recommendations to enhance the security of UK civilian secondees in these locations and reviewed all the security measures and procedures in offices and sleeping accommodation and for transport. They checked that the arrangements for the use of armoured vehicles, armed guards and radio communications were adequate, and looked again at the guidelines for travel, the management of security assets and the methods for keeping staff informed of the latest security situation. A point for further work, on which we are working closely with the US military authorities, is the provision of security information and contingency planning.



The rocket attack on the Al Rashid Hotel in Baghdad on 26 October killed one US soldier working for the CPA and injured a secondee from the Treasury. All the occupants of the hotel have been moved into temporary accommodation elsewhere in the Secure Zone. Jeremy Greenstock requested and COBR commissioned, a further review of security to examine specifically whether the hotel could be made safe for British staff; if not, what alternative arrangements should be made; and how the Secure Zone could be made more secure. This review concluded that the hotel cannot be made safe and that new secure accommodation needs to be found. We are now urgently pursuing the possibility of constructing accommodation in the basement of the Convention Centre. This could take 2-3 months, but we are pressing hard for this to be ready before Christmas; we are also looking at ways to provide interim arrangements. Our security managers in Baghdad have also succeeded in making progress with the US military to provide better security for the Secure Zone, including a series of short-term, quick-impact measures and additional contingency planning and emergency procedures.

COBR also commissioned a review of the security training and briefing provided for civilian staff, and related terms and conditions such as insurance. The purpose was to ensure that there were no material gaps or inconsistencies. None were found except in the case of insurance, where there is a difference between arrangements for MOD civilians and other civil servants. I enclose a paper summarising current arrangements.

We have also considered whether there are any lessons for us in the Ahtisaari report on UN security, which was very critical of the lack of clear accountability for security in the UN's management structure. We are satisfied that our own security management arrangements, both in London and in Iraq, are robust, effective and consistent with our duty of care. In addition to its own staff, the FCO is responsible for secondees to CPA from all other government Departments apart from DFID, and for all consultants employed by it. DFID is responsible for its own staff and consultants. But FCO and DFID have worked very closely together to ensure that we have a common approach to security. On the ground in Iraq, the security guidelines for civilian staff, the security managers and committees, and the security assets are all shared. FCO and DFID Security Advisers have always visited Iraq together and their recommendations have been agreed jointly.

To ensure that security measures and procedures are implemented effectively and the latest threat information is disseminated promptly, we have set up co-ordination structures in London, Baghdad and Basra. The London Iraq Security Committee, chaired by the FCO, meets once a week with a secure video link to Baghdad (to be joined by Basra when their video equipment has been installed). Jeremy Greenstock chairs a UK security committee in Baghdad which is linked into a wider CPA security committee. A similar committee is being set up in Basra. Security issues are also discussed in Cabinet Office meeting including COBR, the group of senior officials chaired by Nigel Sheinwald and the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group, which the Foreign Secretary chairs.



The last fortnight has been particularly difficult for British civilian staff in Baghdad. Our staff, all of them volunteers, face serious risks throughout Iraq. But we are doing what we can to mitigate these risks. A few staff decided to leave Iraq after the attack on the Al Rashid hotel. But those who remain have been impressively stoical; Jeremy Greenstock has assured me that morale is holding up well. But we do not take this for granted. The FCO and DfID Personnel Directors are making a joint visit to Iraq this week to discuss these issues with all UK civilian staff.

The contribution of Whitehall staff to the interim administration and reconstruction of Iraq is considerable and we will continue to depend on this team effort across HMG. I can assure you that we will continue to implement additional security measures rapidly and keep all our security measures under regular review.

I am copying this letter to Chris Fox (ACPO), Rosalind Wright (Serious Fraud Office), David Green (British Council), Mervyn King (Bank of England); and to Wednesday morning colleagues. If you need any further information on these issues, the FCO would be happy to answer any questions.

Tommy

Michael

Michael Jay

IRAQ: CIVILIAN STAFF: TRAINING, BRIEFING, SECURITY AND INSURANCE

PRE-DEPLOYMENT SECURITY TRAINING AND BRIEFING

(a) FCO staff, OGD staff (except DFID and MOD), consultants contracted by FCO

The FCO aims to send all these secondees on a training course at the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre at Nottingham ("Chilwell"). For the first wave of secondees, this included:

- Medical and dental examination
- Inoculations
- Intelligence Brief
- NBC kit issue and familiarisation
- Foreign Weapon familiarisation
- Issue of body armour and helmet, boots, kit bag etc
- Conduct After Capture
- Law of Armed Conflict
- Mine Awareness

The course has since been improved and adapted at FCO request to include:

- Cultural Awareness Brief
- Hostage Situations
- Environmental Health
- Combat First Aid

NBC training has now been discontinued, as has Conduct After Capture and Law of Armed Conflict.

The course also includes a briefing session provided by FCO Iraq Directorate on working and living conditions in Iraq. This includes a preliminary security briefing.

Sometimes there is no course available at Chilwell in the time required for a particular deployment. In that case, the secondee has been sent on an equivalent course provided by a private sector company. In these cases, elements not included in the commercial courses which would have been included at Chilwell are covered separately, eg FCO briefing, medicals and issue of body armour.

In a few cases (eg Sir Jeremy Greenstock himself), the requirement for pre-deployment security training has been overridden. But the FCO Iraq Directorate's firm policy is to insist that all secondees receive such training.

The body armour provided to secondees is of at least the same standard as that issued to the British military in Iraq.

All secondees receive a briefing pack from the FCO Iraq Directorate, including a copy of the Security Procedures for UK secondees to CPA Baghdad.

FCO staff receive short letters of appointment from FCO Personnel Directorate for their temporary duty assignments to Iraq. The FCO is looking at expanding these letters to thank staff for volunteering and to spell out, eg, availability of additional insurance cover (see below). The FCO will share a draft with other government departments and organisations whose civilian staff are seconded to Iraq.

(b) MOD civilian staff

The MOD have arranged their own pre-deployment training and briefing for their own civilian staff. For recent deployments, this has been as for (a) above, except that the MOD have continued to include NBC training for their staff.

(c) DFID staff and consultants contracted by DFID

DFID make their own arrangements for pre-deployment training and briefing. They follow the same principles as in (a) above, but use courses provided by private sector companies because they are more frequent. DFID itself provides briefing on conditions in Iraq and on cultural awareness.

DFID provide body armour to a slightly higher specification than is provided to the British military in Iraq.

Consultants contracted by DFID have been required to provide a brief health declaration signed by their GPs, but have not been subject to specific medical and dental examinations. DFID plan to revise this arrangement, to ensure that consultants are physically fit for the Iraq environment.

Debriefing of secondees on their return from Iraq indicates that they received good preparation (now that some deficiencies in the Chilwell course identified in the early days have been dealt with). Further feedback is now being gathered from UK staff still in Iraq. This generally confirms that the training and briefing has been useful and appropriate. Some possible refinements have been suggested. We will continue to improve and adapt the training and briefing in the light of feedback and as circumstances in Iraq evolve.

Security Briefing and Procedures Following Arrival in Iraq

Baghdad: on arrival, all UK civilian staff are required to read and sign a copy of the Security Procedures for UK secondees to CPA Baghdad (agreed with the FCO's Security Strategy Unit). They also receive a security briefing from the UK Security Manager. These requirements, and the Security Procedures, apply to Iraq Rep and British Office staff as well CPA secondees.

Similar arrangements are being instituted in **Basra** following the recent arrival there of a UK Security Manager.

The Security Managers will provide security support for UK secondees working in the **Governorate Teams** outside Baghdad and Basra.

CPA secondees are also provided with communications equipment (mobile phones/radios as appropriate; satellite phones in the case of DFID) to ensure effective communications when secondees are required to travel outside of CPA compounds.

The CPA provides static security for CPA facilities in Iraq. In most cases, this is being provided through commercial contracts with a private security contractor (ie Global Security). But static security in the Governorates is being provided by coalition military forces pending private security contracts.

In July a joint FCO/DFID team led by the Head of the FCO's Security Strategy Unit advised that the mobile security being provided by coalition military forces did not meet our "duty of care". FCO and DFID have therefore provided armoured vehicles (there will soon be over 40 of these in Iraq) and armed protection teams (provided through a contract with private security

company) for UK civilian staff. All the vehicles are equipped with UHF and VHF radios to ensure operability anywhere in Iraq. In Baghdad, as a result of the increased threat, these armoured vehicles now operate in pairs and the armed escorts have been supplemented by the provision of individual bodyguards to accompany secondees working outside the CPA in cases where a risk assessment finds this necessary. The Security Managers in Baghdad and Basra manage these security assets.

INSURANCE FOR DEATH/INJURY

Civil Servants

(a) Civil Service Pension Scheme

Serving Civil Servants are covered for death and injury by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The broad benefits of the Scheme are;

Death in Service

(i) If an officer dies in service (having been paying the 1.5% Widow's Pension Scheme contributions) beneficiaries receive:

- a tax free lump sum death benefit of twice his/her annual pensionable pay under the Classic pension scheme (and three times annual pensionable pay under the new Classic Plus or Premium schemes);
- for a widow/er, a transitional pension for 3 months at the rate of the officer's pensionable pay, extending to 6 months where there are dependent children; and
- a subsequent payment of a widow/er's pension calculated according to the officer's service and pensionable pay.

(ii) In addition, if an officer is killed while on duty his/her widow/widower receives:

- a tax free lump sum of 6 months' salary;
- a transitional pension for 6 months at the rate of the officer's pensionable pay;
- a guaranteed minimum income of 45% of the officers' salary, plus 10% for each dependent child (up to four).

DFID have encouraged staff to increase death benefit by making Additional Voluntary Contributions to the pension scheme.

Injury in Service

Injury Benefit is payable if an officer sustains an injury which is solely attributable to the nature of his/her duties, and the officer suffers a subsequent loss of earnings, (eg through regrading or retirement on health grounds). The benefits comprise a "guaranteed minimum income" and, if an officer has to leave the service because of injury, a lump sum. Benefits are calculated according to the degree of impairment and the length of service at the time of the incident. The guaranteed minimum income ranges from 15% of pensionable pay awarded to those who have less than 5 years' service and have been assessed to have slight impairment, to 85% of pensionable pay awarded to those who have suffered total impairment (irrespective of years served). If an officer has to leave the service, the lump sum payments ranges from 1/8 to 1/2 of salary. The payment is tax-free.

(b) Life Insurance

The FCO advises all FCO and OGD (except DFID and MOD) secondees who have existing life insurance to check, before deployment, whether their policies will cover death in Iraq. Depending on the insurers' response, the following will apply;

- If the insurers will provide cover under an existing policy but at an extra premium, the FCO will cover this cost for maximum life insurance of four times the officer's salary.
- If the insurers are unwilling to provide cover, the FCO recommends the seconded to take out a new policy with alternative insurers, on which the Iraq Directorate can offer advice. As long as the policy has a term of at least 10 years, the FCO will cover the cost of the additional Iraq-related premium for maximum life cover of four times the officer's salary.

DFID offer the same arrangements for their staff as the FCO does for FCO and OGD staff.

MOD advises all MOD civilian secondees who have existing life insurance to check, before deployment, whether their policies will cover death in Iraq. Depending on the insurers' response, the following will apply;

- If the insurers will provide cover under an existing policy but at an extra premium, the MOD will cover this cost for maximum life cover of four times the officer's salary.
- If the insurers are unwilling to provide cover, the MOD recommends the seconded to take out a new policy with alternative insurers. As long as the policy has a term of at least 10 years, the MOD will cover the cost of the additional Iraq-related premium for maximum life cover of four times the officer's salary.

In any case, if an MOD seconded dies in Iraq and his/her life insurer rejects a claim on the policy solely because the seconded was deployed in Iraq or travelling in an MOD aircraft, MOD will pay the beneficiaries of the policy whatever sum they would otherwise have received from the insurer. There is no limit on this indemnity. Similarly, the MOD will indemnify a seconded - but up to a maximum of £50,000 - if he/she is injured in Iraq and an insurer does not pay out under a personal accident insurance policy because the seconded was deployed in Iraq or travelling in an MOD aircraft. These indemnities are standard terms of MOD employment, and apply to deployments to any operational area; i.e. they are not Iraq-specific.

Consultants

The terms of FCO and DFID contracts with consultants require the consultants to take out personal accident and travel insurance before they deploy. The full cost of this insurance is reimbursed by the FCO and DFID up to a maximum death benefit of £300,000 (FCO) or £250,000 (DFID).