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LOOSE MINUTE

DG Op Pol/4/6/1 (68/03)

26 March 2003

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Special Advisers

IRAQ: DEALING WITH BASRAH

You asked for some points on this. The military machine is working on a more thorough assessment to this complex question. My own quick and dirty run through of some key points is attached, purely to prompt the Ministerial discussion.

Ian Lee

IAN LEE
DG Op Pol

Enclosure:

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11/01/97

BASRAH v. BAGHDAD? FACTORS

US Intent

- CFLCC main effort is Baghdad
- Franks main effort?

UK Intent

- Coalition Objectives (WMD etc)
- Political/Media/Humanitarian pressure

Intelligence Picture

- Situation unclear/confused
- Media add pressure not clarity
- Humanitarian situation not yet critical in Basrah
- Uprising or not? How many bad guys?
- Regime still in control

Options Focus on....

Baghdad

- CFLCC may need more forces
- 7 Armd Bde would take time to get there
- Coalition main effort
- Risks unattended disaster in Basrah

Basrah

- Success builds IO message 'a message to Baghdad'

but

- Divides the coalition effort

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- 1 Div has insufficient forces to guarantee success (depends on situation – see int comments above)

Both

- Possibly keeps coalition focus
- But reduces effect on both (and likelihood of success)

Key Question

- When does political/media/humanitarian pressure (primarily on the UK) in Basrah reach the point at which it destabilises the coalition?

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