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Committee: Sir John Chilcot (Chairman)
Sir Lawrence Freedman
Sir Martin Gilbert
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Our Reference: V001

25 August 2009

To Veterans Organisations, Service Charities and Service and Regimental Associations

At the launch of the Iraq Inquiry on 28 July I stated that one of the first priorities for the Committee was to hear from those seriously affected by the Iraq campaign, including veterans groups. I am writing to you now to request your support and assistance in meeting with veterans of the campaign who are no longer in the Armed Forces so that the Committee and I can hear what they believe the priorities of the Inquiry should be. At the same time the Inquiry is working with the MOD to ensure that the Committee have the opportunity to hear from veterans of the campaign who are still serving in the Armed Forces.

The Committee and I recognise that the veterans of the campaign are geographically spread throughout the UK and beyond. It would be very helpful to the Committee in this aspect of its work if you could provide ideas and proposals on how we might be able to meet with veterans who are no longer serving in the Armed Forces. Your proposals might usefully include the location where events or meetings could take place, the anticipated number of attendees and whether you represent a particular issue or group of veterans. These need not be bespoke events for the Inquiry; if there are existing events already planned which you believe would be appropriate to hold meetings alongside the Committee would be happy to utilise these opportunities. It would be helpful if you could write to the Inquiry with any suggestions for how we might effectively engage with the veterans' community by 10 September. I apologise for the short deadline but subject to diaries this is an aspect of our work we are keen to progress swiftly given the importance we place on it. The Inquiry address is

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Alternatively you can email proposals to the Inquiry. The Inquiry email address is secretariat@iraqinquiry.org.uk

It may not be practically possible to meet directly with every group of veterans we might wish to. The Committee would be happy to receive written submissions at any time from veterans or from your organisations on behalf of the members you represent about what you believe the priorities of the Inquiry should be. I thank you in advance for help in this aspect of the Inquiry's work and look forward to reading your proposals.

Yours sincerely

Sir John Chilcot