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M. Laurent Nunez
Secrétaire D'Etat auprès du ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Place Beauvau
75800, Paris
CEDEX 08

14th December 2018

Dear Minister Nunez,

Thank you for your time and our helpful conversation on 29 November regarding the use of small boats by illegal migrants to the UK. Since we spoke, there have been further incidents and as a result I would like to confirm our offer of support in your actions to address this threat. Our approach must be to make sure that migrants do not succeed in their attempts to reach the UK, to avoid encouraging more people to risk their lives in attempting the dangerous crossing. I continue to be grateful for the efforts your authorities are making.

The UK remains committed to assisting your efforts and to enhancing cooperation to tackle this dangerous modus operandi. At the UK-French Migration Committee in London, on 30 November, UK officials offered additional support to your authorities under our Sandhurst Treaty arrangements. These include:

- (1) Equipment to support the surveillance and interception of small boats departures. For example, providing additional night vision goggles and surveillance equipment.
- (2) To share our experience of communications campaigns to raise awareness among the general public in-and-around small ports of the importance of reporting suspicious maritime activity.
- (3) A Border Force cutter at your disposal to patrol in French territorial waters on which there would be a joint UK and French team to help intercept small boats and, crucially, return migrants to French ports.

I fully appreciate that your authorities are already patrolling the Channel and the proposal of a British Border Force vessel in French territorial waters has political, operational and legal implications that we would need to work on. Nevertheless, I feel that such a symbol of UK/France cooperation would send a strong message of deterrence to illegal migrants and reduce the traffickers/smugglers' business. It is also not unprecedented for law enforcement officers to be operating in each other's territorial waters, as is the case of French Gendarmerie sea marshals on board cross-Channel ferries. The security of the Channel is of course a priority for both our countries, whatever the threat.

Finally, you asked for assistance on returns cooperation in relation to Iraqis found in Northern France. We are working closely to support your officials on the issue and are using Sandhurst Treaty funds to: (i) fund an Iraqi official to be seconded to the Iraqi Embassy in Paris and support re-documentation of migrants (a model we have found helpful to facilitate returns), pending your approval and (ii) fund Kurdish interpreters at the disposal of the Prefecture Nord. We will of course continue to look at how else we might work together in this area.

I understand our Ambassador will be meeting your Director of Cabinet on 17 December. This will be a good opportunity to review the situation and discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

The Right Honourable Caroline Nokes
Minister of State for Immigration