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DOP (I) (05) (6th Meeting)

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CABINET

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND OVERSEAS POLICY
SUB COMMITTEE ON IRAQ

Note by the Secretaries

Please find attached an annotated agenda with annexes A-D for the meeting.

- Annex A - Iraq Political Process – UK Action plan
- Annex B - Draft Security plan
- Annex C - Note on policing and policing fact sheet
- Annex D - Discussion note on Provincial Reconstruction Teams for the US Government

The meeting will be chaired by the Foreign and Defence Secretaries in the Cabinet Office, Conference room C, 70 Whitehall at 10.30am on 03 November.

Signed:

MALDRED
G FERGUSSON

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PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS (PRTs) IN IRAQ: DISCUSSION PAPER

Secretary Rice announced the establishment of PRTs in her testimony to the Congress on 19 October. US officials have said that the overall objectives are to have better pol-mil co-operation; help the Iraqi Government speed up the delivery of services to ordinary Iraqis; and build up local government capacity. The UK supports these objectives and wants to help develop a model, and set of delivery objectives, that mean PRTs add value to current arrangements.

PRTs – UK lessons learnt

There is no fixed template for a PRT, a model for post-conflict reconstruction, which was developed for Afghanistan. Each is tailored to the prevailing security situation, socio-economic conditions, political system and terrain of the area concerned. UK experience has shown that PRTs are effective when:

- they effectively deliver an appropriately resourced integrated team of international military and civilian personnel based in a provincial area of a country.
- they have the support / buy-in of local and central authorities; and close working relationships with international organisations, NGOs and donors to ensure synchronisation of policy and practical implementation.
- they extend the reach of central authorities in order to help facilitate development and reconstruction, primarily by contributing to an improved security environment.

In addition, PRTs are effective because, unlike normal civilian operations PRTs can also support interventionist security sector reform: in the Afghan context helping with demobilisation and disarmament of militias; establishment of an accountable national army and national police force under democratic control; stamping out the drugs trade; and building a legal system.

Experience so far has shown PRTs working most effective in relatively benign security environment where they can seek to contain conflict rather than being configured to confront it. In hostile environments, a wider security net would be needed for them to be effective and the interaction between this and civilian programmes carefully articulated.

What are the opportunities with PRTs in Iraq?

Operations such as in Fallujah and Tal Afar have demonstrated the importance of effective civilian/military co-operation to deliver a balanced package of security and reconstruction. Using a flexible PRT model, the Coalition may be able to reinvigorate some key areas of activity such as:

- Governance. PRTs should aim to enhance relations between central government structures and the provinces. This is important given the strong decentralisation elements in the Constitution.
- Improving donor participation and co-ordination in the field. New co-ordination structures were set up at the Dead-Sea meeting of major donors. These have worked well so far. PRTs could add value through supporting these and facilitating co-ordination. NGO participation in Iraq is currently limited. Ideally, PRTs might provide a future base from which to deploy expertise, although it NGOs are likely to have reservations such close links with the military.
- Expanding international participation. PRTs could provide a mechanism for maintaining wide involvement of existing coalition partners into 2006, and even beyond as the military effort begins to scale down. This is particularly key on governance and security sector reform lines. Non coalition may be more likely to agree to work closely with PRTs.

What are the risks ?

Experience of previous structures at provincial level, and the development of Coalition policy points up a number of risks that will need to be managed.

- Iraqi buy-in. Without this at national and local level, we may repeat the mistakes of previous policies. The CPA "Governorate" teams failed to achieve significant impact on delivery of services despite more benign conditions and Coalition control. They were based on a "one size fits all model", under-staffed on the civilian side, disconnected from Iraqi structures and not linked into long-term planning requirements.
- Perception and Force Protection. Local Iraqis might see the existence of a PRT as a failure to deliver transfer of control. The requirement for force protection may leave the impression - with Iraqis and international community - that PRTs are a "MNF-lite" and perpetuate Coalition military bases throughout Iraq. Furthermore, PRTs have to be mobile and visible. The lack of popular consent, a complicated and dangerous insurgency and a limited membership of the reconstruction Coalition, and the requirement for force protection, militate against this.

- **Resources.** PRTs success, to some degree, will be commensurate with the financial resources available. We understand that the 3 new PRTs are to be funded from within existing resources. We will need to consider in reviewing their impact and considering further roll-out, whether Future PRTs can proceed on this basis. In particular, we would need to ensure that PRTs did not divert, as opposed to complement, effort from essential capacity building efforts elsewhere. In MND(SE) existing military/civilian teams – already deployed to encourage co-operation between governing bodies – could form the basis for the teams, together with the DfID funded single Public Administration Advisors per province.

What should the PRTs focus be and where can they make a difference?

We need to identify where, and how, PRTs in Iraq can add most value. The UK's preliminary view is that PRTs should be focused on focus on improving links between the Governorates and Baghdad to better deliver services and improve governance. Given a heavily centralised system, building capacity at provincial level alone will not work. Our aim should be to set up where we can add value, in consultation with other donors as necessary. The objective should be, through contact facilitation and coaching, to help the current system work better and avoid the establishment of a parallel system. This will become increasingly important in 2006, when the new Iraqi Government will be seeking to consolidate its authority and services with the regions. But there are other questions we might explore during the SVTC, including:

- What are the timelines for implementation and what outputs do we expect PRTs to achieve after 3 / 6 / 9 / 12 months in theatre?
- Which parts of the Iraqi system should PRTs focus on supporting and strengthening?
- Is a PRT desirable in every province in addition to other civilian / military governance operations? What are the priorities?
- How does the PRT concept connect with the conditions based transition planning process?
- How does the Coalition engage the Iraqis on the PRTs and should Iraqi officials be located in PRTs?
- What contributions from other Coalition members should we push for?
- How can PRTs work closely with other international institutions i.e. UN, and how will they support the agreed Dead Sea donor co-ordination structures?

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- What are the resource implications for PRTs? If we are seeking to deliver an effect across Iraq, is it reasonable for costs fall where they lie (e.g. on individual Coalition members?)

Iraq Policy Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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