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FROM: Alistair Fernie
(,)

DATE: 3 December 2002

CC: PS/Suma Chakrabarti

Dave Fish (para 7)

Peter Grant

(pls copy to CHAD)

Mark Lowcock (para 3)

Michael Mosselmans
Carolyn Miller

Nicola Brewer

IRAQ: CONTINGENCY PLANNING

1. No progress across Whitehall with SoS's concerns on costings of various scenarios. MoD work on CBW progressing - eventually. Opportunity to feed concerns about role of UN post-Saddam into new CO/FCO paper for next meetings with US (date not confirmed). FCO consular planning moving quickly - need to stay engaged on travel advice.
2. You might welcome an update on progress on Iraq work since our last meeting with the SoS on 18 November. I fear there isn't much. We should consider how/when we report back to her. Some of the action points across Whitehall might benefit from approaches at your/Suma's level.
3. I took the SoS's main concern to be that we get the Cabinet Office and HMT to look at all costings (military, humanitarian and other) of the various options. Carolyn has raised this with Jim Drummond, and I suggested it at last week's Cabinet Office meeting. We have had a clear negative response; Cabinet Office's line is that if we think DFID will incur unaffordable extra costs we should prepare costings for whatever would fall to DFID and bid to HMT. I spoke to HMT (John Dodds, Head of Defence, Diplomacy and Intelligence) in the margins of the CO meeting; despite some concerns about international burden-sharing he showed little interest in our SoS's concerns, and thought there would be no appetite in HMT for doing Whitehall-wide costings. CHAD are doing some preliminary thumbnail work on possible costings that we can guess at, but we currently have no consumer for this product. Do we need to take this up at a higher level in CO or HMT? Or do as CO says and start circulating some large-ish figures around Whitehall?

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4. Work on CBW modelling in response to our letter to the PM is underway at MoD. We have seen no outputs yet but will meet the MoD team involved next week. We will take stock of that and conversations with CBW planners at the Civil Contingencies Secretariat before considering further contacts with external agencies. Our suspicion is that domestic and military planners are making little provision for the needs of humanitarian workers, far less Iraqi civilians. FCO's approach is purely consular and involves getting people out quickly. We may need a policy decision soon about any training of DFID (probably CHAD OT) staff who could have to work in the region. If this is not available – for capacity or security reasons – from the MoD, another option may be the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague (which oversees the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and provides technical assistance to state parties).
5. is thickening up our relationship with PJHQ and other relevant parts of the MoD. Their lack of thinking on humanitarian issues is quite alarming. We should build on today's useful meeting with Tim Cross to create opportunities to advise them further where we can. I presume he and his colleagues on the PJHQ Iraq OT would be the right people to talk to further about the SoS's interest in "refining the military options" – but how much will they tell/listen to us?
6. There is more Whitehall momentum behind the SoS's concern about the role of the UN. Further discussions with the USA (scheduled either for later this month or early January) will focus on this. FCO and CO are writing a fresh paper, which we have an opportunity to feed into. We should see how this plays before considering taking up the SoS's offer of her involvement.
7. At your suggestion I attended part of an FCO consular conference on Iraq on Friday, involving DHMs from 15 posts in the region. The logistics of FCO planning for a possible massive evacuation from the region are well-advanced – both for post staff and UK citizens across the region. They are fine-tuning their triggers and phasing. Posts are concerned that London is over-cautious and anticipate an increasing workload just as most staff are asked to leave (cf current FCO internal divisions on Yemen). CO has clarified that drastic decisions about travel advice will be taken by COBRA/ministers. We only have two UK-based staff in the region, plus our duty of care to a few consultants, and some NGOs (including those we fund in Iraq). But our work across the Middle East would be severely disrupted by some of the contingencies the FCO is contemplating. We need to follow this closely; the extent to which we might disagree with FCO judgments is not yet clear.
8. Other points:
 - i) We are continuing to gather information about other donor thinking. There are limits to how much further we can

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engage with UN agencies unless we decide to fund contingency planning. There may be further contact with the US on humanitarian issues later this month.

- ii) We met the **NGOs we currently fund** on Monday to talk about ongoing programming and listen to their concerns about contingency planning. We are currently turning down meeting requests with other UK NGOs.
- iii) We will probably have a little over **£1m extra to spend** on Iraq by the end of this FY due to unreliable forecasts from our NGO partners. We propose to allocate this to UNICEF and ICRC's emergency appeals. These are focused on addressing the current humanitarian situation rather than contingency planning, although there will be wider benefits.
- iv) Press Office are considering a **joint response with MoD to the Spelman/Jenkin letter** in the Times, focusing particularly on last paragraph about MoD/DFID "tensions". They will submit to the SoS if appropriate.
- v) We are working up with the Press Office a **core script of lines to take** for media questions, PQs, approaches from NGOs, public enquiries etc.
- vi) You will have seen from the very many telegrams that there is an intense and complex debate going on around the Security Council **renewal of the Oil For Food** programme and reviews of the Goods Review List procedures. Continuation of OFF is critical to the humanitarian situation, but we are not engaging with this debate as we have nothing to add to the FCO's current sensible attempts to lobby the divided US administration.
- vii) We are clarifying further the **division of labour** between MENAD and CHAD under current and future scenarios. It would be useful to include in this support at Director level and above. We have agreed that MENAD should continue to lead until such time as we are involved in a rapid onset humanitarian emergency; although in reality CHAD staff are now doing more of the ongoing work than MENAD. I am talking to Carolyn further about short-term support to my team; I remain concerned we are not leading this work as thoroughly and imaginatively as we could be due to MENAD's chronic staffing constraints.

9. We are trying throughout our external contacts to stick to the SoS's lines about preparing for all contingencies. But there are few takers (across Whitehall, other donors, NGOs) for detailed discussions about the humanitarian consequences of Iraqi SCR compliance leading to the lifting of sanctions.

10. We should consider how and when to go back to the SoS. The prevailing view across Whitehall is that the 8 December Iraqi declaration deadline is not the potential flashpoint she thought; Iraq is likely to produce a long and confusing response, and the UK and others

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will argue hard that under 1441 the declaration in itself cannot be a material breach. Nonetheless we might update her again next week and see if she offers us any further guidance.

11. I am also attaching (for copy recipients more than you) the main points from last Friday's Cabinet Office meeting on Iraq, and a summary of outstanding action points for the DFID Iraq contingency team. (Since I wrote this the CO's own minute of Friday's meeting has come in – let me know if anyone wants to see it.)

Alistair Fernie
Head, Middle East and North Africa Department

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Main points from Cabinet Office AHGI 29 November 2002

Political/intelligence update

- Inspections going well, Iraqis keen to cooperate (prevaricate)
- Iraqi tactics for Dec 8 declaration not clear – probably a lot of text
- CBW threat assessment has been updated
- JIC looking at Iraqi military options on Wednesday
- Short new paper on "predicting Saddam"
- MoD gone public on talking to reservists and accelerated procurement
- HMT clarify £1m reserve announced by Chancellor 'not a ceiling'
- CO has no plans to work on total costings: up to each dep't to bid
- HMT pushing for more work on int'l burden sharing: CO says "not yet"

Domestic contingency planning

- CCS looking at impact of reservist call-up on NHS, firemen etc

Consular planning

- FCO explain consular conference happening simultaneously
- Concerns about eg Kuwaiti/Saudi economies collapsing without expats
- CO clear they, not FCO, will coordinate Whitehall input into major decisions on travel advice – to be taken by COBRA/ministers

Humanitarian/environmental impact

- DEFRA draft work on environmental impact with CO
- CO have nagged DSI (John Rose) about CBW work
- I reported limited contacts with UN agencies given no extra funding
- CO interested in us getting (informal) info on WB/IMF thinking

After Saddam

- SSR – FCO will call another Whitehall meeting/revise paper before next US talks. DFID inputs to date v.welcome
- CO/FCO will coordinate new paper on UN role before next US talks
- Next US talks may be mid Dec (CO prefer) or early Jan (FCO prefer)
- New DSI paper on Islamism in Iraq – no-one present had seen

AOB

- Human Rights report launched 2 Dec
- CIC sending someone to Amman for press work, slot ready in Doha
- Next meeting 13 December

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2 December 2002

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Outstanding action points for Iraq contingency team

From meetings 2/xii and 22/xi

USAID followup

Carolyn pursuing with Wendy Chamberlain (in hand, no result yet?)

_____ exploring with their contacts (poss. visit to US 17/18 Dec?)

Suma/Nicola talking to FCO (result?)

Costings

_____ to find HMT contact (no reply yet from Finance Dep't)

_____ to discuss preliminary rough estimates with _____ then circulate

CBW

_____ arranging meeting with MoD DIS for briefing

_____ will also talk to CCS

_____ will hold off talking to other agencies until UK view is clearer

Other military

_____ will continue building contacts with PJHQ and others

_____ to continue building up detailed local picture of humanitarian situation

Need to consider policy on DFID secondments to MoD etc – selection/training

Programme funding

_____ to discuss further how to spend £1.4m (likely UNICEF/ICRC)

Press/lines to take

_____ to consider response to _____ Times letter

_____ to send draft lines to take to _____ for further work

Division of labour

_____ to flesh out MENAD/CHAD division of labour table

Next meeting

Mon 9 Dec 11.30am

Alistair Fernie

2 December 2002

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