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From: Peter Collecott, Chief Clerk
Date: 27 September 2002

cc: Board Members
Edward Chaplin
William Ehrman
Simon Gass
Stephen Sage
Dickie Stagg
Judith Macgregor, SSU
Julian Metcalfe, ESU
Nick Westcott, ITSU
Charles Gray, MED
IMG
James Watt, Consular Division

To: Michael Jay

SUBJECT: IRAQ CONTINGENCY MEASURES

1. These papers provide an update on contingency planning on Iraq - reinforcement of MED, Emergency arrangements in London, eventual opening of an Embassy in Baghdad, and some security reinforcement at neighbouring Posts. I am also seeking agreement to begin committing up to £2m now.

MED

2. There has already been substantial reinforcement:

- two new members of staff plus one from TOPS have already reinforced MED's Correspondence/Briefing capacity. (They are now up to date with MP's correspondence; and have a 10-day, and reducing, backlog of correspondence from the public.)
- (D7) is to join MED as an additional Deputy as soon as possible. Meanwhile Dominic Chilcott is in MED as a supernumerary senior body.

In addition, we are trawling for a D6 to lead a new Briefing/Public Diplomacy section; and have a list of candidates to be drawn into MED as their requirement grows.

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Emergency Arrangements

3. Work is underway to replace the lighting (including replacing the suspended ceiling) in the Emergency Unit. This is being done so that work can easily be stopped at a couple of days' notice. The longer, more disruptive, replacement of the air conditioning has been put on hold.
4. We have drawn up both a (complicated) wiring diagram of how "command and control" of an emergency can be coordinated; and an organogram for an Iraq Emergency Unit. The latter consists of up to 32 officers, of whom 17 would be working shifts to provide 24/7 cover. We have identified officers with relevant Iraqi/Arab experience; and are updating, via a circular, our list of volunteers at all levels to man an Emergency Unit. We are also identifying a C Band officer to work full-time on Emergency staffing issues in Personnel Command.
5. David Lyscom is also looking separately at how to handle two simultaneous crises. He will report on that soon. Setting up a second Emergency Unit, in eg Lancaster House or around the India Office Council Chamber, looks feasible, but will require some additional cabling and equipment. The costs will not be huge. Alternatively, it may be possible to manage one of the crises from the relevant Department. Staffing two emergencies would require some rapid, and difficult decisions on taking staff from non-involved Departments.
6. Consular Division prefer to operate from their own emergency accommodation. Their current plans are to redeploy staff from elsewhere in the Division in an emergency. Their major need now is to set up arrangements for an external call centre for use during an emergency. This is being done via COI. Set-up costs will be £150k.

Baghdad

7. Based on the Kabul experience, we are planning for an Embassy of, initially, 11 FCO staff (plus 6 from OGDs and 12 Close Protection Officers). We have begun the process of identifying possible staff. On the technical side (TMO, TWO, Communications) we have likely volunteers.
8. David Lyscom's submission of 27 September (attached) sets out in detail the physical infrastructure required - in particular armoured vehicles, portable accommodation and ICT equipment. David's estimates, based on prudent assumptions, are that capital expenditure of £1.83m is required (for Baghdad; possible regional offices in Iraq can be dealt with in slower time); that airlift of equipment, if required, could cost up to £0.9m, and that running costs for the new Embassy could amount to £2.9m a year (half on Close Protection).
9. I support David's recommendation that we should commit now to the capital expenditure. The lead-time for armoured vehicles are very long (20 weeks), giving delivery in late

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February (or early March, given Christmas). The expenditure on vehicles will not be nugatory; we could use them elsewhere if Baghdad does not happen on the timescale envisaged; indeed, we may need them in neighbouring Posts before Baghdad (see below). Expenditure on portable accommodation could appear nugatory if Saddam Hussein remains in power, and we do not re-establish in Baghdad. In the more likely scenario that we will re-establish in Baghdad within the next 6-18 months, we will need the temporary accommodation whether we have had to go to war or not. Moreover, we have a commitment to the FAC to have a facility to rapidly deploy; and the likelihood is that we will need it somewhere well within its lifespan. The ICT equipment is even more fungible with normal needs.

Other Posts

10. SSU have been doing some urgent work on the security of Posts in countries neighbouring Iraq, plus some others particularly vulnerable (eg). Further visits by OSAs to Kuwait, Bahrain, Doha, Riyadh, Tehran, Tripoli and possibly Rabat will take place over the next few weeks. Any new perimeter defences required will be set in hand, funded by SSU (up to the £0.5m remaining in their budget). One issue being looked at is whether Close Protection or protected vehicles are required (eg in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Gulf, Sana'a). The threat in these Posts is likely to be in the run up to, and during, any conflict with Iraq, and may well drop off quickly once a military campaign has ended. Any requirement could be needed soon; but it may be possible subsequently to redeploy CP forces and protected vehicles from here to Baghdad, not to duplicate.

Resources

11. I recommend that we now commit up to £2m of capital to the equipment needed for Baghdad (and perhaps other Posts). We need to get on with these, given the lead times. I understand MOD are currently seeking No 10 agreement to their beginning to spend significant sums (about £120m initially). I have discussed funding with Simon Gass and Julian Metcalfe, ESU. If necessary, SSU may have to postpone some (further), less urgent capital expenditure. However, it is still not ruled out that we obtain some capital EYF from last financial year. This is bound up with negotiations with the Treasury on capital/administration cost reclassification. We are seeking to finalise these negotiations as soon as possible.

12. I see no need to commit substantial new running costs at this stage, except the £150k from Consular Division to put in place arrangements for an external call centre. I recommend this should go ahead. Arrangements for Consular funding more generally are still being negotiated with the Treasury. If the settlement does not cover the £150k in this year, this must be a priority call on funds identified at the mid-year review in October; but should be reimbursed to the centre later from within the Consular envelope.

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Public Presentation

13. We are considerably less exposed than the MoD. Our major, and most visible, expenditure will be on equipment for Baghdad. That is defensible on the grounds that this is prudent planning; re-establishment in Baghdad does not necessarily imply a military campaign or indeed regime change; and that we have a commitment to the FAC to have a rapidly deployable Embassy for use anywhere.

[Signed: Peter Collecott]

Peter Collecott
Chief Clerk

NO. OF ATTACHMENTS:

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