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LOOSE MINUTE

D/PJHQ/10/5341

30 March 2005

PS/Secretary of State

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IRAQ: FORCE PROTECTION AT UK CAMPS

**Issue**

1. Our plans to protect personnel in Op TELIC camps from mortar and other indirect fire attack.

**Recommendation**

2. That Secretary of State:
  - Note that force protection in UK camps is being improved through a continuing programme of "compartmentalisation".
  - Note that this process is most effective when applied to the design of new camps.
  - Note that following agreement at COS last week, we have decided against other approaches to force protection, including the introduction of a new protected sleeping accommodation unit, CITADEL, on the grounds of utility as well as engineering and logistic practicality.

**Timing**

3. Routine.

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## Background

4. UK camps in Iraq are subjected periodically to indirect fire attacks, usually unguided rockets and mortars. Since June 2003, there have been approximately such attacks, which have resulted in 43 UK casualties. We have been fortunate that there have been no fatalities. As can be seen from the graph at Annex A, the number of attacks peaked in August 2004, and of these were focussed in Al Amarah, where we are now less exposed. As a result of this spike in activity, force protection measures were reviewed, and a study was launched to examine whether there is more that could reasonably be done.
5. We therefore looked at a range of options for force protection measures against the background of the usual pattern of indirect fire attacks. These almost always occur without warning, predominantly between noon and 3 am and consist of a handful of incoming mortar or rocket rounds in rapid succession. The four options we examined were:
- Camps constructed entirely of purpose-built protected buildings.
  - A dedicated refuge or shelter within each camp.
  - Protective measures within existing camps (compartmentalisation).
  - Protected sleeping accommodation.
6. The option of purpose-built protected buildings ( ) was not developed in detail. This is because the length of the construction period and permanence of structure did not fit well with our forward planning for Iraq. The option of a dedicated refuge or shelter within each camp was discounted at an early stage.
- Subsequent work therefore concentrated upon improvements to (compartmentalisation), or replacement of (hardening) sleeping accommodation.
7. Trials demonstrated that compartmentalising existing camp accommodation, internally subdividing and protecting larger accommodation units, provided enhanced protection from indirect fire attacks. Annex B illustrates this process. Modelling has shown that in a worse case scenario casualty figures will be reduced by between 40 - 77%, the exact figure being dependent upon the precise point at which the projectile explodes. Because existing camps have not been designed with compartmentalisation in mind (due to the security situation at that time), there are limits to what can be achieved. For new camps, compartmentalisation is being designed in, and greater levels of protection can be achieved. The extant compartmentalisation programme will be complete by the end of April, at a cost of £1.25m.

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8. The benefits which could be realised through a programme of compartmentalisation were therefore assessed against the protection that might accrue from adopting a new, modular system of hardened sleeping accommodation. "CITADEL", based on ISO containers, was the system investigated (illustrated at Annex C). Providing CITADEL sleeping accommodation to all UK forces in Iraq would cost some £35m, and take over 12 months to complete. It would require the commitment to theatre of significant additional logistic and engineering assets, and (on existing troops numbers) the delivery by road of over 3000 ISO containers to UK locations in the south.

9. In trials, CITADEL was found to be proof against

Against this improved level of protection, we weighed the following factors:

- The relatively low frequency of and threat from indirect fire attacks.
- Hazards inherent in implementing CITADEL (a large number of predictable road movements needed to transport the materials to each UK camp).
- Perceived diminution in quality of life that would result from insisting that our troops adopt a CITADEL solution.
- Investment in existing accommodation.
- The fact that protection is only provided when soldiers are occupying the sleeping accommodation: one third of the day.

10. On balance, we concluded that the continuing compartmentalisation of existing camps, and the adoption of this protection policy from the design stage with new accommodation, offers the most appropriate means of mitigating the risk from indirect fire attacks. This has none of the drawbacks outlined above, and can be complemented by a package of operating procedures, tactics, and engineering measures. We also judged that the logistic and engineering effort required in the CITADEL solution posed risks in terms of opportunities for insurgents that were not balanced by the improvement in protection offered. Acknowledging that these are sensitive issues, our conclusions were presented to COS, and endorsed following discussion last week.

### **Presentation**

11. There is a risk that, in the event of a sudden and unexpected upturn in violence, and concomitant increase in indirect fire attacks on our bases, that we could be accused of not having done "everything possible" to ensure the safety of our personnel. The truth is that no measures we can take will offer an absolute guarantee of safety, but also that force protection consists of a blend of tactics and operating procedures, as well as physical measures. In this case, as with most aspects of operations, we have had to make a judgement on what is sensible and practicable.

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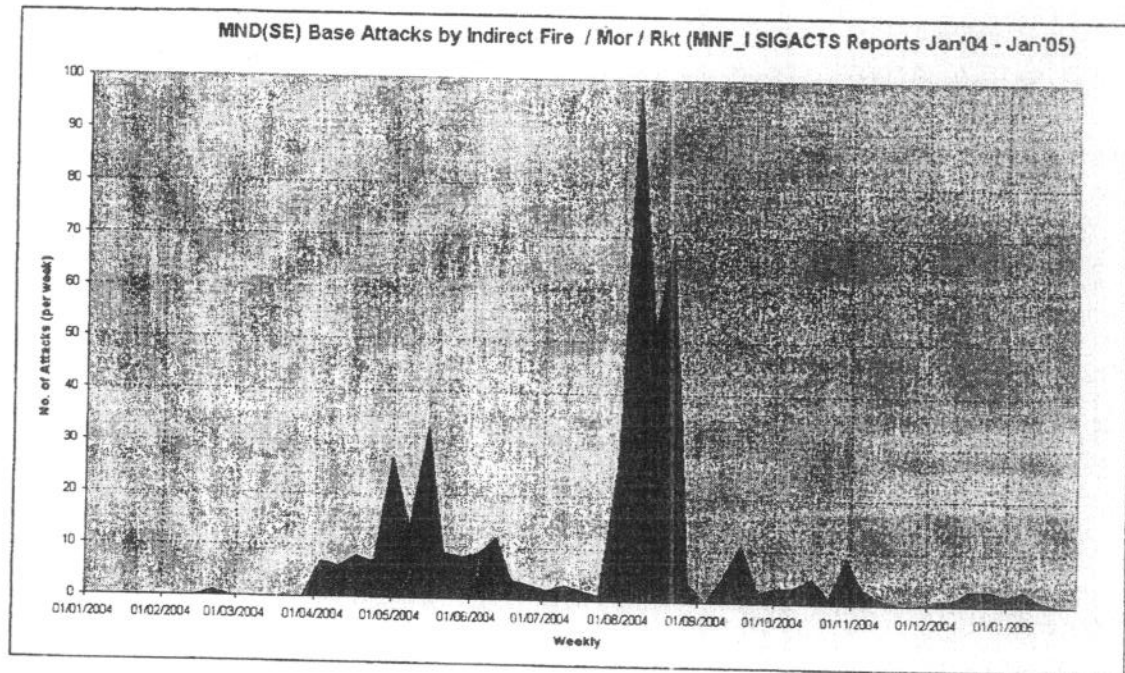
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ANNEX A TO  
D/PJHQ/10/5341  
DATED \*\* MAR 05

GRAPH OF THE NUMBER OF INDIRECT FIRE ATTACKS ON MND(SE)  
CAMPS

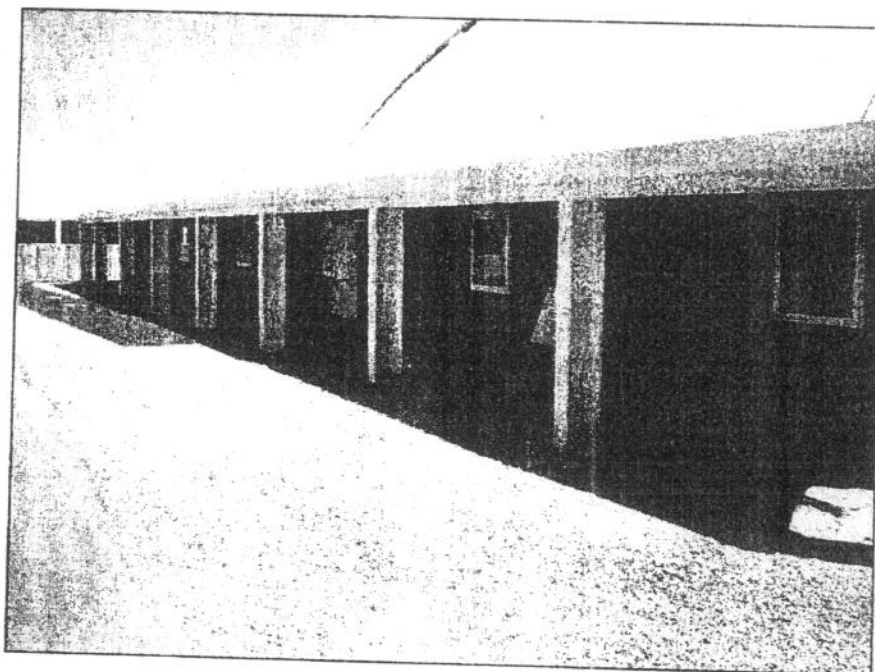


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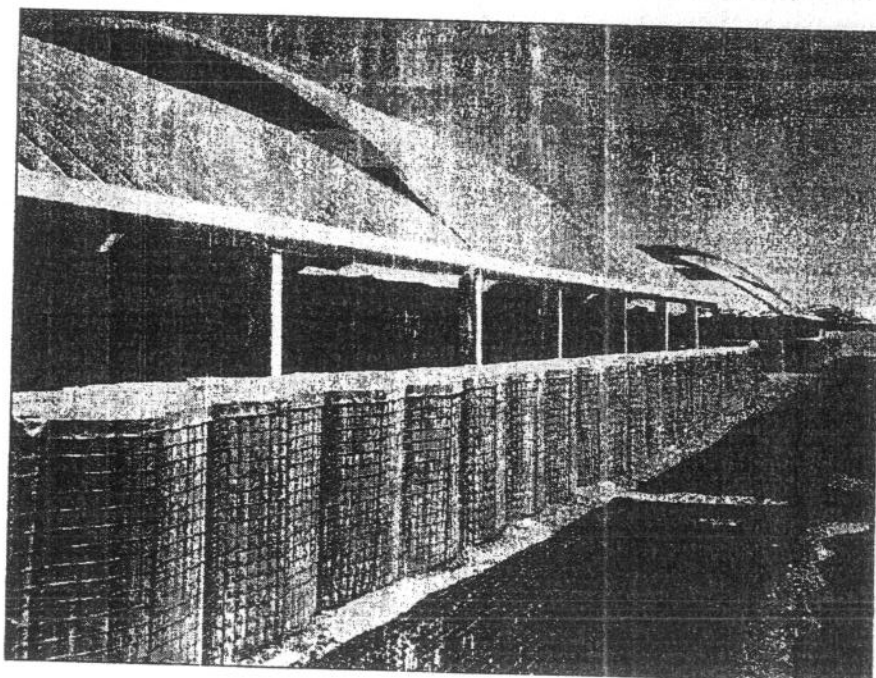
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ANNEX C TO  
D/PJHQ/10/5341  
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TIER 2 ACCOMMODATION IN IRAQ



TIER 2 ACCOMMODATION IN IRAQ – POST COMPARTMENTALISATION



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