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The UK overall plan for Phase IV

Where we are now

1. The US is leading on post conflict or Phase IV¹ planning. The military part in this is being led by CENTCOM's Land Component Headquarters, and the civil piece by its Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). We have military officers and officials seconded to both. They are well placed to influence planning. The UN is also carrying out contingency planning. We are tracking that as well. There are decisions for Ministers to take about the level of UK engagement in Phase IV and key points on which to influence US planning. These are in bold below.

What is needed this week

2. UK forces will be ready to fight soon. By then **we need to have promulgated some principles to guide the campaign** for the first few days of Phase IV. And UK forces are likely to be the first to confront this. These principles need to be agreed this week.

- We shall meet our obligations under International Humanitarian Law.
- We shall minimise the suffering of the Iraqi people.
- Until there is a new UN Security Council mandate, we shall be limited in what we can do to change things in Iraq by our interpretation of International Humanitarian Law and by the laws of armed conflict as they apply to occupying forces.
- Once we have entered Iraq, and if necessary, overcome any resistance, we should help the Iraqi people to help themselves by supporting their own institutions to run the country. From the beginning we will stress publicly that decisions on any new institutions are for them, not for outsiders.
- We shall need to stress that our presence in Iraq is temporary and is to secure compliance with UN resolutions, but we are committed to helping the people of Iraq support themselves over the longer term.
- We shall need to stress that the natural resources of Iraq are for the benefit of the Iraqi people.
- Our involvement in the short term should as far as possible, not exceed the resources that are currently committed, and should keep our options open for the medium term.
- Any evidence of WMD is to be verified by UN inspectors.
- We should seek to internationalise our presence in Iraq as soon as we can.

¹ The military term for the part of the plan that takes place after the fighting has finished. In practice Phase IV starts the moment Coalition forces enter Iraq.

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3. Of equal urgency is the need **to ensure our humanitarian relief effort is in place**. The scale of the UK effort for humanitarian operations depends on assessed need and the expected contributions of others. **Ministers will need to agree this.**

- On humanitarian operations, ORHA are working with the US military and favoured NGOs and holding some discussions with UN agencies. Whilst there has been some preliminary work, detailed plans are not yet in place. Most international NGOs will not work under the direction of Coalition forces. And whilst we should expect them to co-ordinate closely if there is an authorising UNSCR for military action, they are very unlikely to work with the military if there is not one. Our humanitarian planning has been hampered by uncertainty over the legitimacy of any military conflict, and the status of the occupation that would follow. DFID have recently sent officials to the region, including to ORHA and to the UK Division in Kuwait. They are in contact with, and have earmarked £10M for UN and NGO contingency planning. DFID have further detailed deployment plans for humanitarian operations, though some of these are subject to further financing decisions. And the Development Secretary is sending a separate note to the Prime Minister outlining our humanitarian plans.
- It is a fact that Coalition forces will need to fulfil their humanitarian obligations as occupying powers under international law, including the provision of immediate assistance in the absence of other providers. UK forces are currently not funded, nor do they have the capacity, to do this. Although, ideally the role of the Coalition will be to provide a secure environment to allow the UN agencies and NGOs to deliver the relief, there will probably be no UN agencies or NGOs on the ground until they are confident the environment is permissive. The food distribution networks will stop operating from the outbreak of war. At best the Iraqis have perhaps 4 - 6 weeks of food stocks; some may have less. The campaign could well last longer than this. It will be a race against time to resurrect those networks and reconnect the food supplies on which 60% of the population depend.
- The most pressing logistical issues may be clean water and fuel for lorries carrying humanitarian relief. Most Iraqis get water piped to their homes by electrical pumps. If water pipes or electricity stations are damaged in the fighting, they will need to be repaired quickly. Three days is the most human beings can survive without drinking water.

The UK military require resources to provide humanitarian assistance if we are to reduce the risk of a humanitarian disaster. **The Defence and Development Secretaries need to agree on the modalities.**

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What is needed before the fighting starts

4. The **Oil for Food programme** pays for Iraq's humanitarian relief. Once the Iraqi government ceases to function, the Iraqi end of the OFF programme will stop too. We need the UNSC quickly to adopt a new resolution allowing OFF to continue in the new circumstances as soon as conflict starts. Bilateral talks with the US on an OFF resolution are well advanced. **We should agree the text with the US.**

5. Without a **UNSC mandate for Phase IV** (a separate issue from the second resolution authorising military action), the status of occupying forces would be that of belligerent occupants, whose rights are quite limited. The longer an occupation went on, and the further the tasks undertaken departed from the objective of the military action (in this case disarmament), the more difficult it would be to justify an occupation. **The urgent strategic need is to get agreement with the US on an authorising UNSCR for Phase IV.** We should then announce this so as to encourage/galvanise the international community to advance their own preparations. How easily we obtain this additional SCR and international contributions will depend on whether we have managed to secure the second SCR before military action. We are sending to the US our work on an authorising UNSCR, but this will need reinforcing at Ministerial level. US policy on this is moving in our direction, but still has some way to go.

- We need to agree arrangements that will work and get UN Security Council authorisation. We must be realistic about what the UNSC will accept. We judge that the UNSC will only authorise something that looks like a genuine international effort to rebuild Iraq. We believe this rules out any one nation holding a dominant position in the structure. And given suspicion of our motives, we do not think we could secure UNSC support for an American or a Brit as the head of the interim civilian administration. **We should work with the US on the role and ways to identify the right person.**
- Nevertheless, we are clear that in the initial period of Phase IV Iraq will be run by ORHA under the military chain of command leading to CENTCOM. This will be perceived as a military administration. ORHA is organised into three pillars – humanitarian, reconstruction and civil administration. Its vision is to start the transformation of Iraq into a politically pluralist, tolerant country with a free market economy. Unlike the US, we do not think that ORHA will have the legal basis for the widespread reforms it wishes to start, absent an authorising UNSCR. However, the work done during the first weeks and months will shape the mould for what follows. It is therefore crucial that the political framework in which it operates is acceptable. Current US thinking on the arrangements for an Iraqi Consultative Council (ICC), to sit alongside ORHA, is poorly developed to

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say the least. (Our view of the ICC is set out in the draft UNSCR and accompanying commentary that has been forwarded separately.) It is heavily dependent on Free Iraqi membership selected by the US. **This would be unacceptable to ordinary Iraqis and the wider Arab world. We must push US thinking towards arrangements which, while not excluding the Iraqi Diaspora from these decisions, are visibly inclusive of all segments of the population.**

6. **We also need to agree our objectives for the day we hand back power to the Iraqis.** The objectives of our post-conflict occupation of Iraq will be achieved when Iraq has been radically changed for the better. The US ambition is to reform Iraq towards becoming a liberal market economy and multi-party democracy. Holding rigidly to this ambition may greatly delay a draw down of Coalition forces, but this is broadly consistent with our objectives as set out by the Foreign Secretary's statement to the House of Commons on 7 January. From a UK perspective, we see an Iraq that:

- ☐ Has a broad-based, effective and representative government.
- ☐ Has abandoned its WMD programmes.
- ☐ No longer supports terrorism.
- ☐ Has armed forces and intelligence services that are of an appropriate size (striking the balance between not threatening its neighbours and protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq) and are well on the way to being reformed.
- ☐ Complies with its International obligations.
- ☐ Respects human rights and has made significant progress towards a fair and effective justice sector.
- ☐ Is no longer dependent on the oil for food programme and is well on the way to becoming a free market economy.
- ☐ Is no longer subject to sanctions, and has begun to regularise its relations with international financial and trading organisations, with a view to it not being economically hamstrung by debt and reparations.

What will be needed very soon after hostilities commence

7. **We need to agree what our medium term contribution to Iraq should be (say from the autumn onwards). For this will shape our conduct in the short term.**

8. A key issue in determining our policy is the question of 'sectorisation'. This means different things to different people:

- ☐ The military use sectors to co-ordinate security and de-conflict their operations. The size depends on the nature of the task and the permissiveness of the environment. At the conclusion of hostilities Coalition forces will end up in occupation of different parts of Iraq. And on

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current Coalition assumptions, the UK Division will be responsible for around a seventh of Iraq – in an area centred on Basrah – including around 20% of the population. Their role is to provide a secure environment in which the civil authorities can conduct immediate humanitarian relief, followed by wider reconstruction.

- The civil authorities also need a means of co-ordinating their activities. Iraq is governed through 18 administrative areas (see attached map). ORHA envisages this system being the basis for its administrative plan with supervision being provided through 3 sub offices located in the north, the centre and the south. It is also the case that particular expertise in reconstruction is often co-ordinated 'functionally' – so for example it is possible that reform of the justice sector could be handled discretely.

9. Taking the military contribution first. It will be necessary to draw down by the autumn from around 45,000 to 10,000 (roughly down to one brigade) in order to avoid long term damage to the armed forces. The additional costs of maintaining a force of brigade strength in Iraq would be in the order of £1B per annum. The amount of Iraq a brigade would secure in the medium term depends on the permissiveness of the environment. But it is reasonable to assume that a brigade should be able to manage a single, well-populated province. The province of Basrah, for example, has a population of some two million people.

10. There are a variety of options for the employment of a force of this size:

- A UK brigade could be responsible for providing security in a single province of Iraq (eg the Al Basrah province – this would be attractive to us because of its regional significance, its port and infrastructure, and its proximity to established UK facilities in Kuwait). The brigade would operate under another nation's two-star headquarters for the sector as a whole. If sufficient international forces became available, it might be possible to replace elements of the brigade in the medium term.
- A UK Divisional headquarters could take lead responsibility for security, under Coalition command in a larger area of Iraq (eg US planners envisage the Al Basrah, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Wasit provinces being a single sector) We would still provide a brigade, but this would require support from Coalition partners for the two other brigades necessary. This could be presented as a UK -led sector. We should not underestimate the difficulty of finding suitable nations to join us or, even if they were found, the time scale for their deployment.
- In addition (or as an alternative) to providing a brigade, the UK, as the framework nation, could suggest deploying the three star NATO

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Headquarters ACE Rapid Reaction Corps, which has the advantage of being able to deploy rapidly. Its role would need to be defined, but it could have overall responsibility for the security of Iraq. This is not a straightforward option. The ARRC would have to be extracted from NATO, which is not impossible, but could be contentious. There are very few three star HQs that could run the security operation in Iraq and the ARRC would risk being stuck in Iraq for the duration.

- It is also at least theoretically possible that the UK could withdraw its forces altogether in the medium term, though the politics of doing so could be problematic.

Either of the first two options appear acceptable, but we need to consider this level of military contribution in the round. This will involve agreement between Ministers. **And if we choose the second option we shall need to approach potential international partners rapidly.**

11. In any area for which we take responsibility for security, we could also take on **wider civil responsibilities for reconstruction** (including humanitarian assistance and some aspects of civil administration) if there was an appropriate UNSC mandate in place. [This could enable us to demonstrate our effectiveness in an 'exemplary' manner.] However, we believe there are major drawbacks:

- We do not want to introduce artificial administrative boundaries, or 'stove pipes', with different countries leading in different regions of Iraq. As noted above, different functions of reform / reconstruction need to be handled countrywide. The US plan is to administer Iraq as a whole from Baghdad, which must be right.
- If we became responsible for funding, staffing as well as implementing reconstruction in a British sector, the burden would be onerous. We judge that this would very likely be beyond the resources of the UK alone and would have implications for domestic Departments.

We need to agree that the UK should follow the US plan for administering Iraq as a whole and not seek general UK responsibility for the administration of any geographic area of Iraq in the medium term. **(Although it may be appropriate to examine a functional sector in due course, and we would provide advice and assistance where we best could).** However, we need to be clear that if we take on leadership of a military sector, previous deployments of this type suggest that we are likely to inherit wider responsibilities than purely security.

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12. And finally, the situation in **Northern Iraq** is complicated.

CENTCOM has a plan to deal with any internal or external adventurism in the region. Much depends on ongoing discussions with Turkey over the employment of US forces from Turkish soil. But whatever the outcome, US troops will be deployed to secure the Kirkuk oil fields and other key elements of the infrastructure in the north.

Iraq Planning Unit
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