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PS/Secretary of State

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IRAQ: AFTERMATH – BRIEFING FOR MEETING WITH OGD MINISTERS

Issue

1. Issues to raise with OGD Ministers on Iraq Aftermath in the margins of Thursday's Cabinet meeting. I understand that the purpose of the meeting is primarily to discuss humanitarian aid issues, with the questions of "sectorisation" and UN governance for discussion if there is time. The Secretary of State will want to be aware that the Secretary of State for International Development is being briefed by MOD officials this afternoon on the outline of the campaign.

Recommendations

2. That the Secretary of State:
 - a. **Draw on the lines to take attached at Annex A.** Given the Secretary of State's recent meeting with Mr Rumsfeld he will be best placed to brief colleagues on the US position. The lines thus focus on issues where the UK needs to take a position.
 - b. **Note** that there remain significant gaps in UK policy – particularly our position on the level of UK engagement in a post-conflict Iraq. (A separate submission will be prepared to address these issues).
 - c. **Note** that the UK is in the process of establishing a structure to handle the development of policy and planning for aftermath issues that broadly reflects the US structure.
 - d. **Note** that while the UK is well plugged in to US planning structures at all levels (largely through embedded military officers) their effect is currently limited by a lack of UK strategic direction on some key issues.
 - e. **Note** that the Secretary of State for International Development may raise the issue of civilian WMD casualties. If raised the Secretary of State can assure Ms.Short that MOD experts are examining the issue

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and what [if any] mitigating arrangements might be put in place – but the primary aim is to minimise the risk of WMD.

Timing

3. Immediate

Background

Humanitarian assistance

4. The US have a well developed plan for the initial provision of humanitarian assistance. While "fighting is ongoing" they are planning to foot the bill, as 1 UK Div will be operating as one of a number of US CLFCC Divisions. As such it will be provided with a US Civil Affairs battalion (in theatre the US has expressed some surprise that the UK is not providing our own Civil Affairs team). USAID money will pass through Civil Military Operations Centres (CMOCs). The current intention is for there to be a CMOC alongside each Divisional Commander (including 1 UK Div). Though each CMOC will be able to bid for USAID money, the allocation will be determined by the Humanitarian Operations Centre (HOC) at CFLCC level. In other words, initially, as things stand, UK forces will be entirely dependent on US assets and funding for the provision of humanitarian assistance, *and will have to work to US priorities*. DfID are likely to be uncomfortable with this.
5. In the slightly longer term – i.e. once operations move from the most immediate provision of humanitarian relief there is an expectation on the part of the US that the UK will provide funding for HA operations in the UK AO. This raises a policy question about the priority for UK HA funding; should it be spread thinly – across the whole of Iraq, solely on the basis of humanitarian need – or should it be concentrated in the UK AO? More fundamentally, what should be the priority for Iraq when measured against calls on UK humanitarian funding elsewhere?

WMD effects on Iraqi population

6. The Secretary of State for International Development may raise the issue of civilian WMD casualties; this has been a preoccupation of DfID officials for the past few weeks. The UK plan for Op TELIC currently does not take into account the need to care for civilian casualties arising from the use of CBW and medical units assigned to the operation are tailored only to meet the requirement generated by casualties among UK forces and PW. It is appreciated that there is an element of risk in this approach; the DfID point (and it is a fair one) is to ask what the effect on world public opinion will be if there is a visible C or BW attack by Saddam on his own population (or some event during conflict that has a CBW effect) and coalition forces are seen to do nothing to mitigate the effects. There is now some early work starting on options to identify a mitigating capability (not from the UK, but possibly from other coalition nations who have a suitable capability – former Warsaw Pact nations may be well placed in this regard). The lines to take reflect this.

Follow-on forces & Sectorisation

7. The UK has yet to establish a policy on the level or nature of our engagement in post-conflict Iraq. The Secretary of State will be aware that in US circles there is some talk of HQ ARRC taking on the military lead in the transitional

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phase (ie, after the move to a transitional civil administration of some description). This answers a number of questions from a US point of view; it internationalises the occupation of Iraq (something we are arguing for), it delivers an exit strategy for CENTCOM forces and it plays into a US military belief (probably correct) that the UK does post-conflict security rather better than they do. However, the likelihood of this happening will be affected by US administration views of NATO issues; it may be that the administration will not push for this, but might be receptive if it was suggested. There are obviously enormous political and resource implications for ARRC involvement, which will need detailed consideration. For example, if the US press forward without a UN mandate for the transitional civil administration, would the UK want such a high profile role? How would the nature of a US imposed transitional authority colour our thinking? (If, as appears possible, the Office of Post War Planning transitions to being the interim administration of Iraq, the transitional civil administration stands a good chance of having a very "US military" flavour). This may become an issue soon with the US as we press them on their plans for post-conflict. Cost will be a major issue. Although only a very rough first estimate, information being passed to the Treasury this week suggests that the additional, solely military, costs to the UK could reasonably be in the region of £2.3Bn over three years.

8. UK decisions will be guided by (or, if taken soon, could guide) US thinking on their model for the immediate post-conflict administration of Iraq. We know that the US is, at the operational level, currently considering sectorisation, and is assuming for planning purposes that that UK would administer a sector that – roughly – includes the planned 1 Div AO, but extends North to (but does not include) Baghdad. This is only a planning assumption at the moment. But as is the manner with US operational military planning, in the absence of anything else it stands a good chance of becoming the reality. There is currently no UK policy on sectorisation. One is required very soon if we are to have any influence on what the US are planning.
9. It may be worth the Secretary of State making the observation that sectorisation might lead UK civilian administration of that sector; is this a burden that OGDs are prepared to take on?

UN Sanction for Phase 4 and Governance

10. Following his discussions with Mr Rumsfeld the Secretary of State will have fresher information than his colleagues about current US thinking on the nature of a transitional administration, and how best to make the argument with the US that a UN stamp of authority is essential for long term success. (It provides a mandate and legal framework and stands the best chance of being sold to the International Community and regional players – which will be essential if any post conflict governance structures are to take root in the long term). The decision on the basis and structure of governance is the key decision; it will have numerous implications.

Other pressing issues

11. If there is time, the Secretary of State may wish to raise with colleagues the importance now of identifying UK 'red lines'; while our ability now to change US planning for the initial phase of occupation is limited (and becoming more so) there is a need to give guidance to UK forces on where the UK's red-lines are – for example on the detention of non-combatants or the handling of Iraqi oil. The Iraq Policy Unit is seized of these already and work is underway. However it

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may be worthwhile the Secretary of State exposing this issue to ministerial colleagues.

12. It is important that there is an understanding of what are genuine red lines, i.e. where the UK could realistically say "No" or where the issue is so fundamental the UK could reasonably withdraw participation (e.g. guarding personnel we regarded as being unlawfully detained).

UK policy making structure

13. The Secretary of State will be well aware of the status of US planning for the aftermath of military operations in Iraq. In the UK officials have set about establishing a bespoke structure that will provide policy guidance on aftermath issues – initially, principally to the UK military, but also more widely. This is described in diagrammatic form at Annex B.
14. Central to this effort is the Iraq Policy Unit, which has been established in the FCO (though with personnel from MOD and DfID) to co-ordinate the provision of policy guidance. Advising this in an expert capacity is the Iraq Aftermath Strategic Planning Group in the MOD. The main effort of the IPU is to populate a document ("The Iraq Stage IV Subjects Document") that is essentially a structured list of questions with answers that will allow departments to give policy guidance, and will form a 'core script' that will permit our various personnel embedded in US structures to give a unified message on the UK vision for post-conflict Iraq. Many of these are issues of detail, but they have real practical import (for example – whether the US plans to dollarise the Iraqi economy will affect the currency that is issued to 1 Div, who will need to pay contractors in their AO).

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