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## IRAQ CRISIS: WHICH AREAS OF WORK CAN BE GIVEN A LOWER PRIORITY?

1. FCO Departments will lose staff to the Iraq crisis when the two Emergency Units open, and when further staff are required to fill slots elsewhere in subsequent phases. This note sets out areas of work, which may need to be given a lower priority.

### Cross-cutting types of work

2. Departments may need to:
  - Stop providing individual replies to routine letters from members of the public – sending out standard responses instead;
  - Increase the minimum length of time for replies to MPs' letters on non-crisis subjects;
  - Postpone non-essential internal meetings including those on longer term projects;
  - Cancel all non-essential overseas travel - including all familiarisation visits, most attendance at Working Groups in Brussels, all "nice to have" bilateral visits;
  - Cancel all non-essential inward visits - Ministerial and official;
  - Postpone all non-essential training;
  - Postpone all Boarding with urgent cases done by paper Board;
  - Reduce non-essential research work and use Research Analysts to backfill gaps in Departments on a full- or part-time basis;
  - Increase pressure to reform working practices (some of this should be happening anyway and would have longer term benefits) e.g:
    - no brief longer than two pages;
    - submissions to go through only one SMS;
    - no more than one round of consultation on any draft;
    - do not use "Reply to All";
    - send an e-mail only if the recipient needs to know;
    - electronic delivery wherever possible.

### Geographical/functional areas of work

3. If Departments are unable to meet Ministerial demand for work, even after the types of rationalisation described above, we may need to look at transferring people from lower to higher priority areas. Account would need to be taken of people within these Departments (e.g. economists) working on crisis/post-crisis related issues. Lower priority areas might include:

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- Geographical: Latin America, Caribbean, bilateral European desks, North America, Pacific.
  - Functional: maritime, strategic planning, economic analysis, EU multilateral (non-FCO lead), environmental policy, science and technology, Overseas Territories.
  - Administrative: Protocol, public diplomacy, records and historical, management consultancy, internal audit, financial compliance.
4. By contrast, there are many areas where we will want to **avoid drops in capacity**: for example most of our global policy and lobbying capabilities, public services, and long-term projects crucial to the future of the FCO - e.g. future Firecrest and Prism.

DSI  
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