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D/Sec(Iraq)/3/3

13 April 2003

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Special Advisers

**IRAQ/ PHASE IV: COALITION**

1. You asked for a note in advance of US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld's telephone call to the Secretary of State tomorrow in particular bearing in mind that he is likely to ask us to head up a Division in Phase IV and that he is likely to make the same request of the Poles.

2. US Thinking. I attach a copy of slides presented to the Defense Secretary on Friday setting out their way ahead. US thinking on when, how long and where remains immature. But we expect a six-month period, beginning in the Summer, will be the focus, with the UK AOR will remain in SE Iraq. The US are looking for the UK to head a division operating around four provinces, with UK forces covering two provinces and the remainder being dealt with coalition partners. The slides show the Netherlands and Denmark providing a brigade each (which we assess as unrealistic).

3. UK Thinking. As the Secretary of State knows there has been some thinking on what the UK might be able to make available for Phase IV operations. The current working assumption is that we should scale down our contribution to a Division HQ and a brigade, as soon as this is feasible, but by September. This could then be maintained until Spring 2004. Work is in-hand now to scope our potential contribution until Spring 2005. But the question is not simply one of what force levels are available, but what tasks those forces are expected to carry out. This requires further work. It may, for example, be possible to establish a model based on gendarmerie security forces, confining the military to more specialist areas such as dealing with EOD and WMD, together with continued military operations to root out ongoing resistance and security threats.

4. Potential Contributions to UK-led Division. We have begun the "bottom-up" process of sounding out potential coalition partners, who might contribute to a UK led division. Posts were instructed to approach host government on 10 April, but this has so far not produced many firm or militarily significant offers, beyond thinking of which we were already aware. In summary, the Danes look set to provide a reconnaissance squadron and support personnel (not the Brigade the US are assuming). The Spanish, who already have a foot print in

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Umm Qasr, and the Italians may each contribute a brigade; the Dutch seem set to send a marine battalion. The Poles will offer a *battalion* to the US. Bahrain may deploy a Field Hospital and Infantry Company. The Australians are currently planning to draw down, though DA Canberra thinks a light cavalry battalion could be offered with enough persuasion. To a greater or lesser degree, the emergence of a UN role would assist these and other countries (in particular bearing in mind their domestic public opinion) to firm up any offers of support.

5. UK Conditions. In the absence of an agreed set of tasks, and knowledge of coalition contributions, the level of support we will require from US is difficult to determine. The aim should be for coalition partners to be as self-sustaining as possible, but outside established European partners, this is difficult to conceive. In most scenarios we can say therefore that we shall need support from the US or coalition partners in areas such as medical support, engineering, support helicopters, logistics and reconnaissance. Politically, we also need to bottom out the "vital role" for the UN.

6. Way Ahead. Secretary of State will discuss this at his regular update meeting tomorrow morning. The immediate priority would seem to be how we can agree with the US a division of labour in approaching formally potential partners. On the one hand we have a strong interest in talking to partners who will work under UK command, directly and from the very outset. On the other hand, there we do not wish to become involved in a competition with our senior coalition partner. I attach draft lines to take, which the Secretary of State might deploy with Mr Rumsfeld.

Acting Hd Sec(Iraq)

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