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SBLA/008/1

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DECISION IMPERATIVES

(A paper by Comd SBLA)

1. Aim. The aim of this short paper is to assist PJHQ and, if necessary COS', in identifying the imperatives for timely decision making for the commitment of UK Land Forces to OPLAN 1003V.

2. Operational Overview.

a. Developing Operational Situation. Until 28 Dec 02 OPLAN1003V saw land forces conducting offensives from the South, the North and the West into IRAQ in a near simultaneous fashion to overwhelm IRAQI forces and to control BAGHDAD. This would render the Regime impotent, secure WMD and create conditions for a more stable IRAQ and region. On the 28th December it became clear that even the committal of US Ground Forces through TURKEY was in doubt. US and UK planning started to concentrate, urgently, on developing even more robust operations from the South.

Hence 4 ID will sail from CONUS for TURKEY or KUWAIT. It is now clear that even if the UK were also granted transit through TURKEY this would complicate the coalition transit through TURKEY, the complexity and scope of the problem for EUROM and, from a purely operational viewpoint, would not be welcomed by CFLCC.

b. Developing Operations from the South.

DECLASSIFIED

DRAFT

c.

3. **Value of UK Division to CFLCC.** CFLCC would welcome the commitment of a UK division in the South from the start of the operation since it would ameliorate his operational and tactical dilemmas and allow both of his major subordinate commands to strike North, fast. It would allow him, more robustly, to merge Phase II and III. It would allow him to:

- a. Release more US Forces for committal on his Main Effort.
- b. Enable him to have a ground force reserve (15 MEU afloat).
- c. Secure his rear area and part of his right flank.
- d. Have a coherent transition to Phase IV operations in territory captured early without loss of US combat forces.
- e. Demonstrate unequivocally that this is a Coalition operation from the outset.

4. **Potential Mission and Area of Operations.** See Annex B. Discussion between SBLA and 1 MEF (including the CG) demonstrate that the US Marine doctrine and philosophy is very similar to our own. The UK division would be allocated an Area of Operations and a mission to accomplish. 1 MEF would then support the division to allow it to execute its mission. That mission would be a subset of the 1 MEF mission for CFLCC, essentially seize, secure and control. Tasks would include enemy forces, infrastructures such as RAMAYAH oilfields, MSR TAMPA and UM QASR, fixing forces in the area of BASRAH and Phase IV operations. The Area of Operations is likely to be bounded by the IRAQ/KUWAIT border, the V Corps/1 MEF boundary IVO JABILAH airfield, and the EUPHRATES. In area it approximates to the country of KUWAIT. The only significant enemy are the 51st Regular Army Division located around AL BASRAH and the north eastern area of the RAMAYAH oilfields. They are incapable of manoeuvre, have low morale and will be subject of intense deep fires and information operations from A-Day onwards. 6 Regular Army Armoured Division have a battalion within reach of AL BASRAH and the remainder are at least 25 miles further North. They, too, are incapable of manoeuvring in our sense of the word and will be subject to very significant kinetic and non-kinetic effects.

DECLASSIFIED

DRAFT

5. **US Support.** Quite simply as CFLCC and his subordinates see the involvement of a UK division as so important, both from a Coalition perspective and operationally, they will do anything to assist within their power providing there is time to do so. Such support will include:

- a. Making space available in the TPFDL and providing support to Reception of UK forces. It will include the use of AL SHU'AIBAH port in addition to SHUWAIKH. It will include lighterage and portorage. Windows for the use of KCIA are more problematic but will likely be achieved.
- b. 1 MEF will make available beddown (reception and staging) facilities: real estate, life support, fuel and communications. If time allows for full orchestration this will mean that UK forces should not have to use their own resources and stocks before the march to the Line of Departure begins.
- c. Logistic support for any or all common user natures and transport. These must be specifically requested since the US know what they have but not what we need.
- d. Communications and liaison teams will be made available to UK ground forces. 1 MEF have already requested additional LNO teams from CONUS to meet the requirement. UK forces, at least down to brigade level, will be given access to US operational and tactical communications.
- e. Fire support will be provided. The MEF air package on its own is very significant indeed (). ANGLICO teams will be provided to BG level to enable this.
- f.

In summary, provided time is available to coordinate and integrate, the UK FET, particularly in terms of CS and CSS, can be tailored and trimmed by the application of US capability. Further, the UK ground force can be less balanced in its capability than our doctrine and philosophy demand because the US will provide key support particularly in fires and air defence.

6. **Time and Battle Procedure.**

- a. **US Operational Battle Procedure.** It must be recognised that the US headquarters and forces are in the process of amending their plans and their execution to reflect the new operational realities.

Key conferences and synchronisation meetings are happening now and for the next 3 weeks all outside KUWAIT and involving the commanders and planning staffs. These meetings include; MEF synchronisation, MEF

DECLASSIFIED

DRAFT

communications synchronisation and deconfliction, CENTCOM planning synchronisation, targeting, Phase IV planning, C4 synchronisation and deconfliction, TPFDL all culminating in the Component Commanders' Conference in mid-January in TAMPA. Thus UK coordination must occur at these meetings concurrently with operational staffs in KUWAIT.

b. **Ex LUCKY WARRIOR.** The early February Exercise LUCKY WARRIOR 03 will be held in KUWAIT with the primary training audience being HQ CFLCC. 1 MEF will take this opportunity to CPX down to brigade level. This will be followed on 14 Feb by a CFLCC mission rehearsal rock drill. Time is very short indeed if the UK wish to be fully integrated and ready for operations.

c. **3 Cdo Bde.** 3 Cdo Bde planning, coordination and synchronisation is well advanced. However, it should be noted that, against the planning timelines, 42 Cdo RM and 15 MEU will have together under 3 Cdo Bde to prepare for a coordinated offensive.

d. **1 (UK) Armd Div.** The time pressure for 1 (UK) Armd Div (and 16 AA Bde) is even more acute. It must deploy elements of the Division, principally an armoured brigade, coordinate and integrate with 1 MEF, establish its own headquarters, absorb disparate brigades; armoured, air assault and commando, prepare operational plans and Phase IV plans and be ready to be exercised in the first week of February.

e. **RSOI and Logistics.** Logistically time is running out. The US are anticipating providing extensive support to assisting the UK force inflow. They are though experiencing the expected number of 'last-minute' problems that one would associate with bringing several years of planning to a head as the plans turn into 'live' operational activity. They are at this point now – that is last-minute dealings - and whilst they are positively preparing their mindset for UK inflow into the south, they are desperate to see a UK inflow and logistic plan. There is no time left to probe UK/US capabilities in the formal and, perhaps methodical, manner that has been done to date. Now is the time for ruthless, hard-hitting planning with staff work of the highest and most rapid order. Those that deploy to KUWAIT on planning reces this coming week must be authorised to make decisions out here on the ground. This will demand some clear guidance, constraints and endorsed assumptions from UK before the recce/planning teams deploy. This will enable parallel work on some of the key enabling activities to commence by the end of this coming week. It will also be in time to squeeze some of the key UK requirements into the final shaping that the US are conducting against their logistic plans (RSOI, logistic beddown (pax, equipment, vehicles, aviation etc), scheme of supply, medical evacuation, EPW, theatre movement, etc) as they continue to transition from plans to operations.

DECLASSIFIED

DRAFT

The UK is an issue they are eager to address – as each day passes now this issue is snowballing and soon (probably by 12 Jan 03) it will be difficult to control inside the planning timelines.

f. **C4IS.** If we run with the South, we still have some way to go on generating the full spectrum of C4IS. We are planning to weave together 3 disparate levels of formation (1 MEF, 1 (UK) Armd Div, a Cdo Bde, a AA Bde and an armd bde) neither of which (with one obvious exception) have trained nor operated together in recent history. Their mission rehearsal starts 8 Feb 03 (with Ex LUCKY WARRIOR (LW03)), under the full gaze of the rest of the Coalition, and they had better be ready for it. This will demand that each formation HQ is in place at FOC, with no reliance on emulated communication links, by 25 Jan 03 latest. This will allow 14 clear days to work up the essential TTPs that will enable LW03 to be the successful, confidence building exercise that it most certainly needs to be.

7. **Recommendations.** As the man on the ground fully involved in CFLCC planning and preparation and with a 'feel' for what is operationally possible in time, I most strongly recommend the following:

- a. It is recognised now that any opportunity for worthwhile UK involvement of land forces in the North has come and gone.
- b. UK tailored forces of a divisional headquarters, 3 Cdo Bde RM, 16 AA Bde and the necessary logistic C2 and CSS is committed to the South through KUWAIT.
- c. Acceptance, in principle, of a UK Area of Operation and mission in the area of southern IRAQ bounded in the north by the EUPHRATES.
- d. All efforts are devoted to enabling deployment, communications, C2, RSOI and sustainment to be made, in coordination with the US, with refinement of tactical employment to be developed by GOC 1 (UK) Armd Div with 1 MEF.

The effect of timely decisions on the above on our own ability to successfully conduct operations and on our US allies cannot be underestimated.

Enclosures:

1. CENTCOM / CFLCC Phaselines.
2. Graphical Overlay – Proposed 1 (UK) Armd Div AO.