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Reference

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FROM:

Ext:

DATE:

20 December 2002

CC:

PS/Suma Chakrabarti
Peter Grant
Carolyn Miller
Michael Mosselmans
Alastair Fernie

To: Nicola Brewer

MEETINGS WITH MOD OFFICIALS

At your request you met Stephen Pollard, Head of MOD's Overseas Secretariat (Sec O) on 18 December, and Ian Lee, Director General Operational Policy (MOD) and (unannounced) Simon Webb MOD Policy Director on 20 December to talk about the apparent reluctance of the MOD to engage more consistently with DFID on crisis response planning.

2. In your meeting with Ian Lee (and briefly during your informal call on Simon Webb afterwards) you also raised two country specific issues that the Secretary of State would wish officials to pursue. I attended all meetings. This note records the less highly classified parts of your discussions.

DFID/MOD consultation

3. The importance of engagement between DFID and MOD was explored at some length in both meetings. The MOD appreciates the need for this dialogue particularly when dealing with humanitarian issues but the issue of Operational Security (Op Sec) is a hurdle to early and more consistent consultation. Technically is the level of technical clearance required but Op Sec and the need to know is much more difficult to define. The key MOD and PJHQ decision makers on this issue are Simon Webb, Policy Director and Lt General Tony Pigott, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Commitments) advised by Ian Lee. Thus your scheduled meetings with

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them in January should serve to raise the profile of the importance of joint planning at a sufficiently senior level to facilitate improved working level contact in the MOD and at PJHQ.

4. In the meantime Ian Lee agreed to draw up a list of MOD/PJHQ meetings where DFID involvement, op sec allowing, would be valuable. You agreed that DFID would provide to Ian Lee on Monday 23 December a list of cleared CHAD and MENAD personnel suitable to attend such meetings. (**Action Alastair Fernie:** to draw up list and pass to MOD and, if any CHAD/MENAD individuals are DV

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Potential Scenarios

5. Both Mr Pollard and Mr Lee outlined a number of scenarios currently under contingency planning consideration; this confirmed that little thought is being given to humanitarian operations and again reinforced the DFID view of the necessity to share information on potential response capacity in military forces and the international humanitarian community. As in Kosovo and elsewhere it was important that DFID be made aware of the potential military assets and resources that in an emergency might be put at the temporary disposal of the humanitarian community.

6. You also raised the issue of a 'stabilisation force' and the importance of determining what role the UK could play to achieve an "ISAF-like effect" elsewhere. Making a demonstrable (and rapid) difference to the civil population's lives was vital to the success of any political-military plan and to wider regional stability. Ian Lee saw the advantage of HMG-wide discussion on this. There was a brief reference to this in a draft policy objectives document currently being discussed. It would need to be reflected in UK campaign objectives. They had not yet been drawn up. Without such guidance detailed planning for the UK's contribution to stabilisation activities was very difficult and to date little had been done on this. It was agreed that this issue had to be raised at senior levels (COBRA) and ways found to take it forward rapidly in the new year.

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Simon Webb, MOD Policy Director

7. You called in on Simon Webb briefly following the meeting with Ian Lee. He is clearly focussed on aftermath planning; you briefed on the Secretary of State's similar interest in post conflict stabilisation strategies and agreed that this should be discussed further during your meeting on 10 January. Mr Webb appeared interested to do so and appreciative of DFID views, although sceptical about the role/abilities of the UN.