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UNDO-2/UNGO13/002/09		
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY		
13 APR 2004		
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INDEX	PA	Action Taken

19 February 2004

POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION: FOLLOW UP TO DOP

It may be helpful if I set out in more detail what seem to me to be the next steps following Ministers' discussion of the Post Conflict Reconstruction paper at last week's meeting of DOP.

2. As recommended, Ministers agreed the principle of a Unit to coordinate HMG's contribution to post conflict reconstruction; to plan, implement and manage the military/civilian transaction; and the civilian component of post conflict reconstruction; and to promote linkages and integration with the wider international community.

3. As regards the Unit, they envisaged something between options 2 and 3. I suggest that in practice this means building on option 2 with an effective capacity to identify, train and maintain contact with suitable and deployable officials in central government departments, local government and the devolved administrations. This should include a mechanism involving a presumption that those selected, before being trained, would be released by their departments. This presumably cannot be a wholly firm undertaking; but departments must make a commitment to play fair or the investment in training will be wasted.

4. This should be included in the 'details of recruits, staffing, location and accountability' of the Unit which the paper focused on in its "Next Steps" section. Ministers' presumption was that the Unit itself should not have a deployable capacity. But if departments want to retain this as a

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option, a separate case will need to be presented including the costings involved and how such staff would be usefully engaged between crises.

5. The immediate task is a paper dealing with these points for presentation to the meeting of the International Sub Committee of the Civil Service Management Board on 3 March. It should also make a recommendation on the location of the Unit, and how it will be funded in the period up till the end of 2005/06, during which funding will have to come from existing resources.

6. The 3 March Sub Committee will include senior officials (including PUSs) not only of the three departments most closely involved, plus the Treasury, but also of several departments who will not previously have been involved but who may in due course be suppliers of deployable personnel. The meeting will be a first opportunity to secure their support.

7. On mechanics, it will be necessary to get the paper to the Sub Committee's secretariat on the morning of 27 February, for circulation that afternoon. I assume that, as for DOP, it should be a trilateral paper. I see from the Sub Committee's agenda that the FCO is listed as presenting it. This may well make sense, but presumably needs to be agreed; and the presenter selected.

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