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**IRAQ: POSSIBLE MILITARY REINFORCEMENT
PAPERS ON CIVILIAN IMPLICATIONS AND THE WIDER CONTEXT**

I attach papers prepared by the Overseas and Defence Secretariat setting out:

- the civilian aspects of extending our area responsibilities in Iraq. It focuses on the commitments the UK might face in bringing development and capacity building in any new areas under our area of operations up to the current levels in MND(SE); and the likely additional requirement for civilian staffing under the various military options being considered; and
- the wider context of a decision to deploy additional UK forces.

I am sending copies to Kara Owen (FCO), Chris Baker (MOD), Moazzam Malik (DFID), Mark Bowman (HMT), CDS, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, PS/'C' and John Scarlett.



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IRAQ: CIVILIAN ASPECTS OF POSSIBLE MILITARY EXPANSION PLANS**Summary**

An extension of the UK Area of Operations into Najaf and Qadisiyah, the creation of an UK-led Corps HQ for the South, or a combination of both, would require adequate arrangements for civil liaison and economic reconstruction. Information on political and reconstruction situation is limited. A civilian recce has not yet been possible. Reconstruction in Qadisiyah province is proceeding reasonably well, but is dependent on the security situation. Najaf province is more difficult because of security in Najaf city. The key challenge in both provinces is unemployment. Civilian support for a military deployment to Najaf and Qadisiyah could require 9-12 civilian reconstruction advisers plus 4 police advisers, 20 police mentors, 3 prison advisers, 2 judicial advisers and up to 3 political advisers to the military forces. Deployment of an ARRC-based Corps HQ would require 3-7 advisers located in the HQs, governorates and in Baghdad/Basra. Political liaison officers might also be needed in the 4 provinces where there is not an existing UK presence. Programme funding is not a significant constraint as PMO and other funds are already allocated, but we would face an important challenge to ensure effective disbursement. Adequate civilian support possible for either military option, subject to recce and the security situation allowing the deployment of advisers.

Detail

If the UK takes on additional area responsibilities in southern Iraq, it is essential to ensure that there is an adequate civilian underpinning to the military deployment. There should be a civilian element accompanying the military formations to ensure that high standards of political sensitivity and liaison with Iraqi civil structures are maintained. We need also to ensure that UK military responsibilities are linked to work by DFID to reduce unemployment and poverty and, where necessary, to appropriate capacity building in the Iraqi system (particularly in the public administration, police, justice and prison sectors). DFID and FCO have not been able to conduct a recce in the two provinces because of security constraints. Therefore the assessment below is based on a limited number of sources of varying reliability.

Situation in Najaf and Qadisiyah

Unlike the MND(SE) area, neither province suffered significant war damage (recent or Iran/Iraq) or physical damage from Ba'athist persecution of Shia (although there was significant Saddam-era institutionalised neglect). The key problem is unemployment.

Qadisiyah is a mainly agricultural area with the population evenly split between urban and rural. US\$9m of CPA assistance has been disbursed

across the normal range of sectors and US\$1m on a local government project; there are no problems with disbursement beyond the norm. The Programme Management Office (PMO) is planning a large number of programmes, but none has started yet. Reportedly, there are good relations between the CPA and local council, and the Governor is an effective technocrat.

Najaf province is largely desert, with the exception of Najaf city itself and its neighbour Al-Kufa. Most of the population is urban. The CPA has not provided information on disbursement of reconstruction funds. But it is clear that the security situation in the city, as well as the exclusion of non-Muslims from the extensive religious areas of the city, has constrained development efforts. It therefore seems likely that CPA reconstruction work in Najaf is less advanced, though pilgrims and the Iranians have brought in new money. If the security situation normalises, there is a good prospect of self-regeneration in Najaf from the economic activity coming from city's role as a pilgrimage centre. Addressing development issues in Najaf is a priority, given the city's pivotal political significance. The new Governor is well regarded.

Civilian support for military expansion to Najaf and Qadisiyah

There are six areas in which civilian support for reconstruction would be desirable:

- A. Immediate benefits for the local population through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These could be funded from US CERPS money and/or HMG money disbursed by the military with advice from a DFID adviser;
- B. Longer term reconstruction. In the early stages this will mainly come from the Supplemental, with some from the UN/World Bank International Reconstruction Financing Facility for Iraq (IRFFI). This might need UK advisors to be implanted with the PMO as is planned for Basra;
- C. Ensuring salaries and other normal recurrent government expenditure comes through, and is well spent. This is mainly a matter for the Iraqis' own budget system. An option would be to support to the Iraqi Governorate Teams including on planning and budgeting, with advisors requiring easy access to the local authority;
- D. Support for the political process and civil society. Ensuring that national level programmes on civil society support and political development were fully exploited in/targeted to the two provinces;
- E. Police trainers/mentors;
- F. Advisors on Judiciary/Prison capacity building.

This package could require 6-8 development advisors and 4 police trainers to mentor the Chief of Police and develop civil/military training initiatives. A further 20 international police advisers would be required for mentoring across the provinces. Additionally, 3 prison advisers would be required to work alongside the current CPA (South) team. A dedicated judicial adviser specialising in the criminal justice sector would be required for each province.

A major constraint on making these commitments (particularly B-F above) is the uncertain security environment. More work, starting with a recce visit to the provinces, would be needed before DFID or the FCO could decide whether it was possible to put people in.

In addition there would be a requirement for political advice:

- Political Advisers (POLADs) – 2-3 (one per battlegroup and HQ);
- Senior Arabist (probably FCO) political advisor in Najaf.

This amounts to a commitment of, perhaps, 10-12 reconstruction advisors and political officers plus up to 29 police/prisons/judicial advisors. Additional funds for reconstruction should not be necessary, as there are already CPA/PMO funds available. The key task would be to ensure that these funds are fully and effectively disbursed. An exception might be QIPs funds, but a conditional element of taking on the territorial extension might reasonably be that the US provision for CERPs (the US QIPs equivalent) in these provinces be transferred to us.

HQ ARRC deployment

If the UK chose to deploy the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) HQ, the requirements would be more limited at between 3-7 civilian advisers:

- A POLAD in the ARRC and a civil liaison officer in HQ MND(CS);
- A Senior Arabist (probably FCO) as a political advisor focussing on links with the Shia plus, if appropriate and feasible, four additional political advisors in the governorates where the UK did not have military forces on the ground.
- A requirement to ensure good linkages between the whole southern area and Baghdad on disbursement of reconstruction funds. But this might not require any additional development/reconstruction advisors on the ground rather increased work and focus at national/regional level.

Under either military option, the additional forces would arrive after the hand-over of sovereignty. The Iraqi governorate staff should be working direct with ministries in Baghdad. The CPA will have left, but the contractors funded by the US\$18.6bn US Supplemental should have started work. By September, the demand for power should be starting to fall as the summer heat recedes.

Conclusion

On present information, we conclude that:

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- Working alongside any additional military role in southern Iraq, the UK's key development objective would be to ensure that existing projects went ahead and that all available funds was effectively disbursed;
- reconstruction costs should not fall to the UK: existing funds, already allocated, should remain available;
- if there were gaps in reconstruction funding, we should look to the US for additional resources for infrastructure projects in the areas under UK command.

The overall assessment was that, subject to the security situation allowing the deployment of advisers, the civilian implications of either military option are manageable.

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IRAQ: POSSIBLE MILITARY REINFORCEMENT: THE CONTEXT

1. Overseas and Defence Secretariat was asked to set out the context in which additional UK forces might be committed to Iraq following the recent US request.

2. The Secretary of State for Defence will write separately, based on the recommendations made by the Chiefs of Staff. The options under consideration are:
 - to incorporate the provinces of Najaf and Qadisiyah, currently within the Polish-led Multinational Division (Central South) (MND-CS) into the UK-led Multinational Division (South East) (MND-SE). US forces are currently operating in these provinces, having taken over from the withdrawn Spanish forces. This option would require the deployment of a Brigade HQ and three battle groups;
 - to provide a Corps HQ, based on the UK-led ARRC HQ now committed to NATO, to take on a new function of overseeing both the Polish-led MND-CS and UK-led MND-SE, with a UK battle group in reserve;
 - a combination of both these options.

There is of course also the option to provide no additional forces and keep to our existing responsibilities.

Assumptions

3. We understand that the ARRC HQ, option could not be in full operation before August. The possible extension into the two provinces in current MND(CS) could not be fully achieved before September.

4. Under either option, it is assumed that by the time the deployment is completed the Iraqi Interim Government will be in place, with control of Iraqi forces in partnership with the Multinational Force.

5. We also assume that by the time these deployments took place, the security situation would be similar to that at present. Specifically, the new Iraqi institutions and the MNF would have to operate with:

- minimal overall Sunni consent;
- continuing passive consent from the Shia communities, with residual disturbances emerging from radical splinter groups such as Muqtada al-Sadr; and
- large scale attacks by foreign fighter/Zarqawi-related groups, directed at the new institutions, western representations and forces, and Shia leaders and gatherings.

Potential Strategic Gains

6. The US forces have been stretched by the departure of the Spanish contingent and their associates, but have the resources to cope. But this departure and the revelations since of US abuses against detainees have increased the American's sense of isolation. A positive British response to their enquiry about further support would address this. In principle it should also increase our leverage with the Americans on Iraqi strategic issues. If we provide additional forces, we should press hard for the US to make us a genuine partner in the leadership of the MNF. (After 1 July, decisions on such issues as last month's handling of Fallujah will in any case have to be done in consultation with the Interim Iraqi Government.)

7. Specifically, we would envisage that an important potential gain under any of the reinforcement options would be to give us greater control of the handling of the Shia community. Achieving a settlement to the Muqtada al-Sadr disturbances, particularly in Najaf, and stabilising law and order in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala would undoubtedly help maintain Shia

consent on a firmer footing. It might also ease the political handling of al-Sistani and other leading Shia clerics at a politically important time. The approach we have followed in MND(SE), with its greater emphasis on 'hearts and minds' and less heavy-handed physical interventions, may be more productive and less risky in this respect than the standard US approach. But the complexities of managing al-Sadr and the Shia dimension generally are considerable.

8. Timely success in the management of the Shia heartland (by any of these options) could be of strategic significance in determining overall success in Iraq. That case rests on: whether the additional forces and responsibilities would make a genuine difference to the strategic success of our task in Iraq, and whether the US are prepared to give us a genuine share in strategic decision-making in the MNF.

Prospects of Success

9. If we were looking at immediate deployment under either option, the impact could be considerable. But it is hard to assess now the strategic impact of deployments in August or September: the situation, for instance in Najaf, could have deteriorated irretrievably, or the handling of the Shia could prove more troublesome than we envisage now. It might be too late to influence strategic outcomes decisively.

10. The unavoidable delay in implementing any deployment also requires us to decide now on an increase in our forces when our public policy is to promote Iraqi-isation. The troops would arrive 6-10 weeks after the handover to the Interim Iraqi Government. We can legitimately argue that we have always assumed that security risks will continue, and quite possibly grow, in the run up to elections. But we would undoubtedly face criticism on this score; and it could well look odd, appearing to cast doubt on our faith in the handover to Iraqi sovereignty.

11. Nor is it clear that in practice we would win significantly greater influence with the US military authorities on strategic issues as a result of the deployment. We shall have senior staff officers well placed in the MNF command structures. But while this has been effective in influencing some broad strategic discussion, notably on the relationship between the MNF and Iraqi armed forces, it has had little effect on operational issues. And we shall no longer have the joint occupier role which we currently have in the CPA.

12. We know little about the areas for which we would be taking on additional responsibility. DFID and FCO representatives have been unable for security reasons to visit the area since the possibility of these deployments arose. We should not commit troops – particularly directly into Najaf and Qadisiyah – in a context where the civil development backup is significantly weaker than in the rest of the British area of operations, or where we have no realistic means of raising it to that level. Reasonable provision appears to have been made by the CPA and Programme Management Office for projects to be identified and funded. A separate paper on civil aspects of the deployment suggests that the available information does not rule out either option. But we have virtually no knowledge of the quality of the projects or the capability of the delivery systems. Nor do we have much knowledge about the governance systems, their capacity, or the quality or otherwise of individual local players.

13. Extending MND(SE) would give us direct management of Najaf, the most sensitive Shia hot-spot. Providing a Corps HQ for the South should increase our influence in MNF strategy development. The unknowns – in terms of local political and economic conditions are significant. The suggested deployments by themselves should improve the strategic balance in Iraq, but would not be decisive.

Domestic Context

14. Opposition parties have said they are against extending the UK military commitment in Iraq but would be more sympathetic to requests from military commanders for reinforcements for force protection or to strengthen our position in dealing with existing commitments. To the extent that one purpose of the expansion proposals under consideration would be to handle Najaf better than we believe the Americans can, this is clearly not a line which can be publicly deployed, though a leaked version of something on these lines emerged at the weekend. Our line would need to be that we would bring strategic coherence to the handling of the Shia heartland at the vital period of transition, backing Brahimi's efforts and in support of the UNSCR's objectives.

Overseas & Defence Secretariat

Cabinet Office

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