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#### **CIVIL EFFECT**

I have seen Margaret Aldred's letter of 16 January, attaching the paper by the Cabinet Office reporting the outcome of the Review which looked at how we could strengthen our ability to deliver civil effect and meet the Prime Minister's commitment to create a thousand strong civilian standby capacity.

I have taken a close interest in this issue which I regard as a key element of our national capabilities. As the paper acknowledges, there have been significant developments over the last few years and I saw for myself the ground breaking work which is being done in Afghanistan as a result of the decision to establish a civilian led team in Lashkar Gah last year. Our allies are rightly interested in our thinking.

Nevertheless, as the Review identified, there is scope for improvement. We also need to use our enhanced capability to encourage and leverage others to do more. This is an important aspect of the Prime Minister's approach to this issue, which was a major element in his announcement of the National Security Strategy.

In that context, while I strongly believe this is an area where we should be seeking to do more in the longer term, I am satisfied that the proposals for taking forward the development of our capability over the next 12-18 months represent a sensible balance between ambition and realism. But we should look again at the question of the size of our capability in the next Spending Review.

I am pleased to see that the Stabilisation Unit is already taking forward a number of the recommendations and that an Implementation Team should be fully in place by the end of February. It has, however, taken some time to get inter-departmental agreement on the way ahead. Enhancing our capability in this area is a key element of the National Security Strategy and one to which the Prime Minister attaches particular importance. I hope that departments will now be able to devote the energy and resources to this issue which will



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be essential if we are to have significant progress to report on delivery of real capability when the update of the National Security Strategy is published before the Summer Recess.

Finally, on a detailed point, I am concerned that the arrangements for leading the enhanced Stabilisation Unit have not been finalised. I understand the proposal is that the Implementation Team should be led at Director level for 6-8 months, but the Unit would then be managed within DFID's existing structure. I attach considerable importance to having a designated individual at Director level specifically responsible for delivering capability. From my perspective it would make sense for the individual selected to Head the Implementation Team to be clearly identified as the designated head of the enhanced Unit. That way we would ensure ownership and enthusiasm for taking forward the Implementation Team's recommendations.

I will continue to work with Peter, Bill and Minouche to make sure that we have well founded implementation plans for the delivery of the enhanced capability.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Peter Ricketts (FCO), Paul Rimmer and Bill Jeffrey (MOD), and Minouche Shafik (DFID), Simon McDonald and Margaret Aldred (CO), and to Jeremy Heywood and Tom Fletcher (No 10)

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