

From: Mike O'Brien  
Date: 30 April 2003

cc: Sir Michael Jay  
Mr Ricketts  
Mr Chaplin  
David Manning, No 10

To: Foreign Secretary

SUBJECT: MR O'BRIEN'S CALL ON AIR MARSHAL ~~X~~ BURRIDGE

1. Doha telno 87 of 29 April (attached) touched on Air Marshall BurrIDGE's concerns about the way DFID had handled Iraq. I thought these comments worth recording separately in a more restricted minute.
2. What BurrIDGE actually said was "DFID is a disgrace. a bloody disgrace". Then added what he really thought was 'barely printable'. Although he 'dearly loved Clare Short' he had been frustrated by DFID's reaction to military action from the start. DFID's officials had attended planning meetings, apparently under instructions not to participate in discussions or make preparations for the humanitarian consequences of military action. As a result DFID was unprepared when military action finally started. Since then they have been trying to catch up. Sometimes the inadequacy of preparations was hampering rather than helping aid distribution to the southern region. In BurrIDGE's view, DFID needed to get involved - and quickly. The lack of co-operation with ORHA was of concern.
3. Reconstruction was the key area where DFID could be involved in a highly visible way. But so far nothing seemed to be happening. In the meantime private companies and individuals (including Richard Branson) were already giving support and expense to several sectors.
4. BurrIDGE is keen his comments are kept confidential - he says his feelings about DFID have already been used against the MoD in Cabinet meetings. However he has offered to produce a paper on DFID's response, as seen from his perspective which he will feed in shortly.

Mike O'Brien

*Dictated by the Minister and signed in his absence*